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LIFE

OF

JOSIAH WEDGWOOD

VOL. I.

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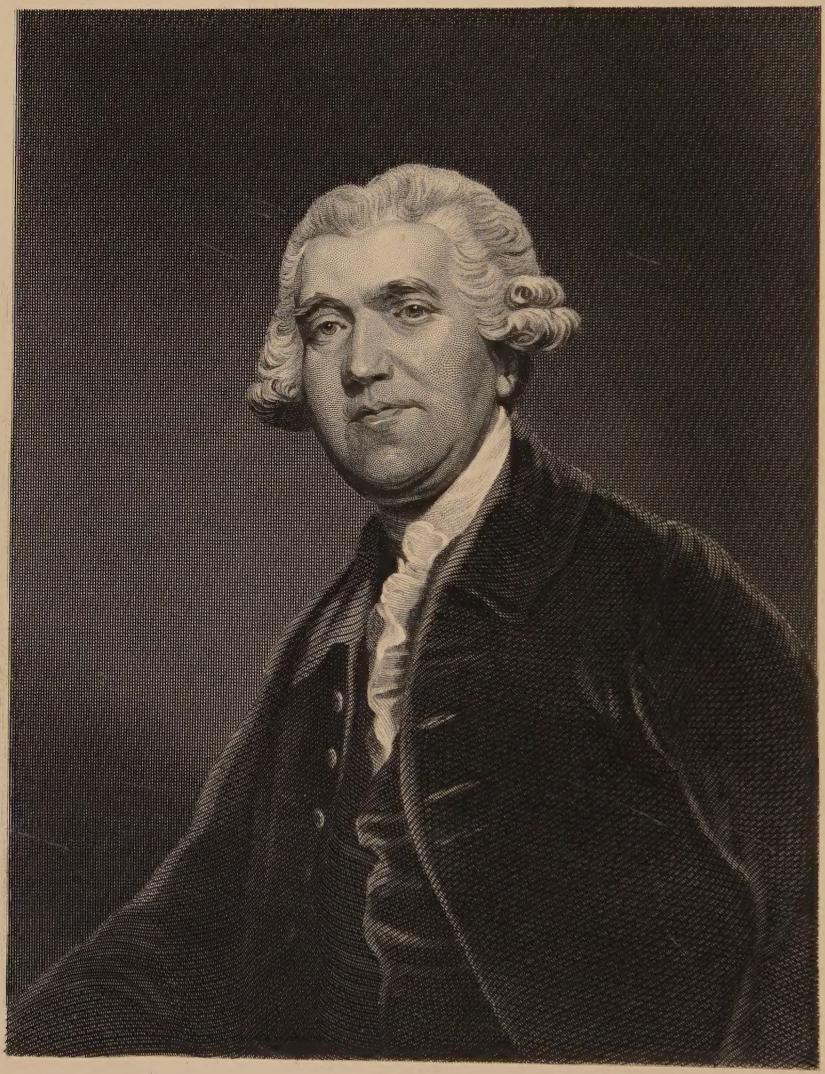
'England has long taken a lead among the nations of Europe for the cheapness of her manufactures: not so for their beauty. And if the day shall ever come when she shall be as eminent in taste as she is now in economy of production, my belief is that that result will probably be due to no other single man in so great a degree as to Wedgwood.' — *Speech of the* RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, *at Burslem, October* 1863.



truly, & affectionately yours

J. Wedgwood

Etruria 14th Feb: 1774

LONDON: HURST & BLACKETT

THE LIFE

OF

JOSIAH WEDGWOOD

FROM

HIS PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE AND FAMILY PAPERS

IN THE POSSESSION OF

JOSEPH MAYER. ESQ., F.S.A.

F. WEDGWOOD, ESQ.

C. DARWIN, ESQ., M.A., F.R.S.

MISS WEDGWOOD

AND OTHER

ORIGINAL SOURCES

WITH

An Introductory Sketch of the Art of Pottery in England

BY ELIZA METEYARD

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

STAFFORDSHIRE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
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LONDON

HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS

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1865

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER

THIS LIFE OF

JOSIAH WEDGWOOD

SO GENEROUSLY REFERRED TO IN HIS SPEECH AT BURSLEM

OCTOBER 26, 1863

IS

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PREFACE.

A Life of Josiah Wedgwood has been long a need in modern literature. The generation contemporary with him, and who could have told so much that was vivid and personal, seem to have considered no man's acts in relation to his time worthy of literary record, unless such related to diplomacy, to war, or to politics. The heroes of the Great Industries were especially unregarded; and it has been left to a later day, to men of wider knowledge, sounder judgment, and more enlarged sympathies, to write their lives, and tell a newer generation how and by what means, by what services, and often by what self-sacrifices, these Englishmen benefited their country and their kind.

Within recent years several writers of conspicuous ability have turned their wistful gaze in the direction of Wedgwood's biography. But they were daunted by finding few materials at hand, they lacked the patience or sagacity necessary for such inquiries, or needed the knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, the art of which Wedgwood was the great master. To write his life without a practical knowledge of pottery, would be similar to an attempt to

write the life of Mozart or Haydn without a knowledge of music, or the life of our great Landseer or Stanfield without a knowledge of painting.

Meanwhile materials were accumulating, and one hand was endeavouring by diligence and tender care to efface the oblivious neglect of two generations. Whilst it was not a fashion to admire and collect the masterpieces of Wedgwood's skill, Joseph Mayer of Liverpool, and Thomas De la Rue of London, led by nature's great gift—an exquisite taste—were gathering around them the choicest works of their great countryman; and whilst few cared to learn how one of the greatest men of the last half of the eighteenth century lived, and how he wrought, Joseph Mayer was hoarding up every little scrap of information, purchasing old deeds and papers, and seeking amidst the generation fast passing away for vivid glimpses of the man their eyes had looked on and their lips spoken to. Eventually, by a mere accident as strange as it was interesting, a very large portion of the business papers belonging to Mr. Wedgwood's works, both at Burslem and Etruria, passed into his hands. It is therefore to be regretted that, for want of necessary leisure, he has been unable to fulfil the long-cherished intention of writing this biography himself. A native of Northern Staffordshire, sprung from those who had been personal friends and fellow-labourers of Wedgwood, an artist, a practical potter, a man of letters, he had all the necessary requirements for a task so worthy. As it is, by his public spirit, his generosity, his aid in every artistic way, Joseph Mayer of Liverpool has done more than any man living for the memory of

Wedgwood, and for setting his life as an example, and his noble works as a lesson, before the world; and this must not be forgotten by those who deal out the justices of literary and artistic fame.

For fifteen years I have had this work in view. The names of Wedgwood and Darwin were amongst the earliest known to me. In the town where I passed my childhood were many who well remembered Mr. Wedgwood, and many pleasant anecdotes were afloat concerning him. Amongst my father's patients were two or three who had known him personally; a descendant of his schoolmaster lived a stone's-throw from our door; and household tastes made Wedgwood-ware an admired object. One quaint old dwelling is at this moment before my eyes. Its mistress was an aged gentlewoman, a native of Birmingham, who through her relations knew much of the great potter at the time he was Wheildon's partner and subsequently. She was the possessor of many early specimens of Staffordshire ware, including exquisite little oval snuff-boxes, candlesticks, and other articles made by Wheildon; and green-glazed dishes, red engined teapots, and cream-ware, by Wedgwood. Amongst some gifts she enriched me with, were the remnants of a brown-lined toy dinner-service. Of this the little tureen was the wonder of my childish eyes, for its shape was exquisite, and the handle of the lid, in the form of a hazel-nut, was set amidst a group of russet leaves. The modelling and colouring of these betrayed the hand of a master.

Other circumstances brought me in contact with much old English pottery. For more than forty years my

father held a medical appointment in connection with Government, and when at the close of the war he settled down in the county town referred to, his duties in relation thereto took him occasional journeys into the districts around. When his work was over, if the season were summer or autumn, I was generally sent for to the houses of country friends, of whom we had many, and then day by day, for a week, sometimes a fortnight, we took holiday together. He was a fine classical scholar, and loved antiquities: I was thus his companion—riding when the distances were great—whilst he traced old British trackways, Roman roads, or visited remnants of primeval forest land, old tumuli, old churches, old halls, farmhouses, and country granges. It was in these latter places, many of them coeval with the Plantagenets and Tudors, that I saw on quaint shelves, or garnishing huge dressers, the tygs, the posset-pots, and the pictured dishes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. I well remember one day spent on the Longmynd hills, in order to follow the trackway by which the Romans brought supplies of earthenware from the potteries in the valley of the Severn and the north of Staffordshire, to the military stations south and south-west of Uriconium. The scene is before me now—the solitary gorge in the wild waste, the trickling springs, the velvet turf bathed in the glory of the autumnal sun, the trackway worn white and bare to the rock, and winding sinuously till it was lost in the shadowy distances of the waste, the myriad harebells waving in the wind, and the eternal silence of nature brooding over all. On another occasion, when staying

at a country-house at Chesterton on the borders of Staffordshire, we lost our way whilst tracing an old Roman road. As the autumnal evening began to fade, we emerged on a low-lying moorland, where stood an outlying pot-work, as rude as those I have described elsewhere. Here was the old-fashioned sun-pan, the sod-covered working-sheds, the thatched dwelling-place, the lines of red and black crocks, and pans just drawn from the oven, the dammed-up spring, and a file of asses with empty panniers, followed by two women in partially male attire, winding their way homeward from the distance. The whole made a scene still remembered. Such were some of the circumstances which roused in me a taste for the pottery of my native land; and when to these are added others—only faintly touched upon where I speak of the Delft potteries and the commercial intercourse between Holland and the eastern shores of this country in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—it will be seen that there are other causes for the tastes which led me to this subject. I have from the beginning viewed my task in a wide and comprehensive spirit. I saw that we have to regard Wedgwood not only as a potter and an artist, but as a profound chemist in relation to his art, a philosophic thinker, and a great industrial leader. I saw that we must view him by the social history of the age in which he lived, and by the indirect operation of his great artistic improvements upon our own. But, for a long time, the necessities of other literary labour left me little leisure, except a day now and then for the gathering collateral information. Yet I

made progress; and when at length Mr. Mayer promised me the use of his Wedgwood papers, it seemed that I should at last realise the dream of many years. Besides intrusting his literary treasures to my care, Mr. Mayer kindly permitted me to work for a fortnight under his personal guidance through the more difficult papers, imparted to me many anecdotes, derived from various sources, but principally from his mother, a neighbour and personal friend of Mr. Wedgwood, and the daughter of John Pepper, the architect who built the chief bridges of the Trent and Mersey Navigation. He introduced me to his brother, the late Mr. Jos Mayer of Burslem. During a most pleasant week spent with the latter and Mrs. Mayer, that gentleman took me on two occasions through his works, and, like a good and patient schoolmaster, instructed me in every process connected therewith, even to the fritting of the glazes, a point not usually shown to strangers. These volumes will likewise prove that some of the best artistic treasures of Mr. Mayer's collection have been placed at my disposal, including Chubbard's portrait of Thomas Bentley, now for the first time engraved for the second volume; and he has been good enough to read every chapter in MS. as I have slowly progressed.

To pass carefully through such a voluminous mass of papers was necessarily a work of time, more particularly as they have even yet no chronological arrangement. It took me some months to make a *catalogue raisonné*, and from this, in order to organise the work, I compiled a chronological index. As soon as these volumes were

advertised, Miss Wedgwood and Mr. Darwin, in a spirit of the most generous and kindly friendship, placed their respective collections of letters between Wedgwood and Bentley, and Darwin and Wedgwood, into my hands, thus necessarily adding to the preparative work, but also proportionally to the originality of the results. With the exception of some bills, books of workmen's wages, and a few letters scattered here and there, these documents and letters, as a whole, undoubtedly exhaust all the original information now in existence relative to Josiah Wedgwood. The letters Miss Wedgwood has confided to me are of extraordinary value. They bring us, as will be seen, face to face with the living man, tell us what we never knew before, and betray to us many of the precious secrets of his art. If Mr. Mayer's documents form the bones and sinews of the book, Miss Wedgwood's are its lifeblood.

With so much of truth therefore for our guide, let us hope that many of the fictions current as to Wedgwood will pass into merited oblivion. We must never hear again of the 'coarse, ignorant, diseased, impoverished workman.' Josiah Wedgwood was none of these. Like too many of us, he suffered from physical infirmity, and, as happens in other of our most important handicrafts, he had to undergo much preliminary drudgery, or, in his own expressive words, 'to begin at the lowest round of the ladder.' The very nature of the potter's art requires this. But he received a good elementary education, and most certainly never knew poverty in our modern acceptation of the term, for the majority of his relatives were all

persons of substance, and formed, with the Warburtons, the Palmers, the Adamses, the Mayers, and many others, the aristocracy of the Pottery villages. We shall also see that royal patronage was conferred upon him, not because he sought it, but because he could do work no other Staffordshire potter could. The story of the presentation of a caudle-service to Queen Charlotte on the birth of the Prince of Wales is also untrue. Mr. Wedgwood may have subsequently presented a service of the kind to her Majesty, but the order which brought him in contact for the *first time* with royalty came through Miss Deborah Chetwynd, and was for a tea-service in green and gold. Mr. Mayer's information fully corroborates these facts in Mr. Wedgwood's letters. We shall also learn that the real name of Mr. Wedgwood's second manufactory in Burslem was the 'Brick-House Works,' hired by him as such, and retained by him in this name till 1772–3. The 'Bell Works' was a mere workmen's sobriquet, and one which, by a very common process in nomenclature, overshadowed to extinction the real title. Many other assertions relative to the great potter are thus corrected, and in a manner the most convincing, by himself.

We have for the first time unfolded to us many particulars of one of the noblest friendships on record, that between Josiah Wedgwood and Thomas Bentley. Their personal characteristics so supplemented each other, that the union was absolutely perfect; a marriage of intellect, taste, and truth. Social history has nothing finer in it than this story of their lives or the influence these had

upon ceramic art. But we must eliminate from this story all romance about an archdeacon of Ely, and aristocratic patronage gained through such connection. The great classical critic Richard Bentley and the Liverpool merchant were men not only of a different generation, but unknown and unrelated to each other. When the latter first came to London as Wedgwood's partner, in August 1769, his personal friends were Holborn haberdashers and city merchants, with perhaps a few acquaintances in the House of Commons. But we soon find him a man of renown. His handsome person, his courtly manners, his breadth of culture, his noble reason, all tended to his popularity. He entertained morning audiences of duchesses and ladies in Newport Street and Greek Street with a gallantry and grace that were of infinite service in a business point of view. With a vase or bas-relief poised in his hand, he descanted on Greek or Etruscan art, quoted Pliny, or his favourite Thomson, and the next half-hour was speaking in mellifluous Italian or excellent French with ambassadors and foreign counts, or rolling in his chariot towards the Queen's palace, or my Lord Mansfield's chambers in Lincoln's Inn, with some beautiful work that common eyes had not yet looked on. With less profoundness of intellect, less weight of judgment, less habitual gravity, Bentley equalled his friend in all those moral attributes which lend dignity to human nature. In honour and tenderness of feeling he was as sensitive as a woman ; and there can be no doubt that his superior cultivation and general breadth of view told with extraordinary effect not only upon the intelligence

and characteristics of the man he loved, but on the art they made their mistress. It has been well said that art can never flourish except in an age of freedom ; it may be said with equal truth, that no man can do justice to art, either under its purely ideal phase, or conjointly with a utilitarian purpose, unless he looks upon the universal world from as wide a point of view as his culture will admit of ; and the wider this is, the more likely is he to make perfect the work his soul loves.

It will be seen that there is much which is new relative to the Trent and Mersey Navigation, and to Brindley, Boulton, and many other equally illustrious men. We take by the hand, as it were, many of the most noted characters of the last half of the eighteenth century. The aristocracy of the period stand out *en beau*—that of Staffordshire especially ; and the Duke of Sutherland has at this moment no brighter jewel in his ducal coronet than the revelation these letters make of the graceful intercourse between Trentham, Burslem, and Etruria. To their honour be it said, the Leveson-Gowers, the Egertons, the Talbots, the De Greys, the Chetwynds, the Sneyds, the Ansons, the Broughtons, the Heathcotes, the Bagots, and others, were amongst the earliest who used Wedgwood's exquisite cream-ware, praised it, and recommended it to their friends. The foundations of this patronage lay necessarily in the unwearied and persistent labour which had enabled him to grasp the laws and secrets of his art ; but it is not less an honour or less a truth that the nobles of his county

were amongst his earliest and truest patrons. Their simple and graceful courtesies bring to mind the dukes and princes of the age of the Renaissance. The province of his labours lay wide apart from politics, and therefore Wedgwood saw the fairest side of the English aristocracy. Whether Whigs or Tories, they vied with each other in placing works of art at his disposal; and amongst the charming facts handed down to us in these letters are many relative to the Duke of Northumberland, the Duke of Argyle, Lord Bessborough, Lord Charlemont, Lord Clanbrassil, Lord March, Lord Carlisle, Sir Watkin Williams Wynne, Sir William Meredith, Sir Harbord Harbord, and many others, as artistic patrons and friends. I hope ultimately to add to these volumes a list of ornamental and useful ware, with dates of purchase and names of purchasers, so far as can now be gathered from the documents and papers. Such a list will be of great value to the connoisseur and collector, and at the same time be a bead-roll of the English aristocracy.

On many points of scientific interest we gain great light. We approximate to a date for the invention of the mortar-material, and we trace Wedgwood's unwearied search amongst spars of all kinds for the *terra ponderosa*, or carbonate of barytes. In this search he was aided by Dr. Fothergill, Dr. Darwin, Mr. Vigor of Manchester, Mr. Whitehurst of Derby, and by even Brindley. But Bentley was the friend who procured for him at last some true specimens, probably from the mines of Anglezarke in Lancashire. From this date we hear of continued ex-

periments, till these culminated in the perfection of the jasper body and all the contingent results which have immortalised Wedgwood's name.

The artists who contributed to the perfection and beauty of the ornamental ware are far more numerous than is generally supposed. John Bacon was at work for Wedgwood in 1769, seven years prior to the advent of Flaxman; and Hackwood, Pingo, Theodore Parker, Mrs. Landre, Coward, Hoskins, Tassie, and others supplied designs or casts for the chief bas-reliefs, cameos, intaglios, medallions, and tablets indexed in the first and second catalogues. The *Somnus* or Sleeping Boy, an exquisite engraving of which will appear in the second volume, was modelled by Coward and Hoskins in 1772. In all these works, as afterwards in respect to those of Flaxman, Webber, and one or more Italian artists who were employed, there can be no doubt that Wedgwood exercised a controlling judgment. The artist's model was one thing, but its transference by the potter's hands into the materials of his art was often another. Mr. Gladstone uttered a profound truth when he said, 'I for one cannot accept the doctrine of those who would have us ascribe to Flaxman the whole merit of Wedgwood's productions considered as works of art.' This is where the judgment of the man of genius and the scholar accustomed to deal with great questions, and to base his inferences upon the laws of human thought, is always so sound and approximately true. Wedgwood's absolutely perfect vision and consummate taste are obvious in a thousand things besides his art; and there is no reasonable doubt that even

Flaxman's masterpieces were amenable to his judgment, and occasionally perfected in detail by his hand.

I have entered upon my task with a brief history of pottery in this country. It is drawn with much pains from many rare sources, and will, I hope, be acceptable to the general reader, more particularly as there does not exist, to my knowledge, any *résumé* of the kind. Many questions connected with Wedgwood's life refer back to the old days of the potter's art, and in writing it I have had a higher purpose than even this in view. In making the tilework of the middle ages popularly known, I wish my countrymen to see that taste is latent in our race as much as manipulative skill is visible and present with us. Let us seek to unite skilful handicraft and true art. I am English and insular enough to believe that we can achieve all things if we will, and that we can erase the reproach against us that we have no taste. I am willing to believe, judging from many analogies and pregnant signs, that this rebirth of Wedgwood's fame is something more than the fashion of the hour. Wedgwood had one great disappointment in his artistic life. He wished to induce the architects of his day, amongst them the brothers Adams, who built the Adelphi, and Sir William Chambers, to introduce terra-cotta ornaments and bas-reliefs into the façades and other parts of houses and buildings. But, like his friend Erasmus Darwin, he was greater than his time, and the architects would not listen. Let us, therefore, in this day realise the dreams of the great master, and at this point take up his art. Whilst nature is eternal and ever prolific, imitation is unworthy of the artist. As

the men of science purify the atmosphere of our cities and towns, as assuredly they will, let our public buildings become in the best sense palaces of art, and the interior of our houses shrines of simple taste in ornament and colour. Wall-linings of terra cotta would do away with the barbarous taste of the paperhanger and upholsterer, and floors of exquisite tilework would serve to border the warm embracing carpet. Here would be work enough for the potter and the artist; and in the chastity of colour and the purity of design we might rival antiquity, whilst true to the spirit of our generation.

In addition to my great obligations to Mr. Mayer, Mr. Darwin, and Miss Wedgwood, I am indebted for aid to Mr. Francis Wedgwood and Mr. Godfrey Wedgwood of Etruria. I have also to thank Mr. Roach Smith, Mr. Bennett Woodcroft (of the Patent Office), Mr. Smiles, Mr. Trenham Reeks (of the School of Mines, Jermyn Street), Mr. Wallis, (of the Kensington Museum), Mr. Warne of Ewell, Mr. Chaffers, Dr. Kendrick of Warrington, Mr. Langford of Birmingham, Mr. Aaron Wedgwood of Burslem, Mr. Woodall of Longport, and many other friends, for aid which, if in many cases slight, has served essentially to final results. Several ladies, as Mrs. Joseph Parkes, Mrs. Boot, and Mrs. Wilkinson, have also contributed recollections and papers.

It is only justice to add that my publishers, Messrs. Hurst and Blackett, have carried out my wishes relative to the work in the most generous manner. Neither pains nor expense have been spared; for they well understand that, in connection with works of this

character, cheap art is bad art. The second volume of the work is far advanced, and will appear at no late date. It will be a perfect shrine of the masterpieces of Wedgwood's art. The *Somnus* or Sleeping Boy, the cup and saucer of the Russian service, Flaxman's bas-relief of the Birth of Achilles, and a matchless bronze vase, from the respective collections of Mr. De la Rue, Mr. Mayer, Dr. Hooker and Mr. Bohn, are only types of the whole. Specimens will also appear from the collections of Mr. Roger Smith, Dr. Sibson, and others. Some valuable sketches of a local character, as the Ivy House and Works, and the Brick House and Works, are due to the memory and pencil of Mr. Aaron Wedgwood of Burslem; but of Mr. Bentley's house in Liverpool no man had recollections enough to aid the artist. Any sketch, therefore, would be apocryphal.

Mr. Pearson has been my enthusiastic and efficient coadjutor in all the difficult work connected with the illustrations. In this respect an author's task is usually most laborious, but in the present instance the toil has been turned into pleasure. The beauty of the illustrations will bespeak his skill as an engraver and director of the work of others. The book is also much indebted to the able pencil of Mr. Justyne. His beautiful and faithful rendering of the cup and saucer of the Russian service, the chimney-piece at Longton Hall, the bronze vase belonging to Mr. Bohn, the sketch of Wedgwood's birthplace and of modern Burslem, as also his exquisite copy of Stubbs's family picture at Barlaston, are worthy of all

praise. To the great merits of the last, the possessor of the picture, Mr. Francis Wedgwood, has himself testified. The work of some of the other artists is also admirable, as in the case of the cameos, and amongst other things of a dish from the Kensington Museum, with a floral border in red on a black ground.

I have retained the spelling and punctuation of the letters and documents, and throughout have spared neither pains nor a conscientious sense of duty. During one of his interviews with the Duke of Bridgewater, Wedgwood met Brown—'Capability Brown' as he was called—the well-known landscape gardener. Some pleasantries followed, and amongst others Brown remarked that 'his life was devoted to lords and gentlemen;' and 'mine,' added Mr. Wedgwood, 'to the ladies.' As this was truth, though jest, and the great potter enriched the tables of our countrywomen with ware of every kind, decorated their rooms with flower-pots, bas-reliefs, and vases, and their persons with the loveliest ornaments, so it is perhaps not unfitting that one, his countrywoman also, should be the first to tell with reverence, humility, and truth, all that he did for England and the English name. If, like the gem-engravers of antiquity or the artists in silver and ivory of the Renaissance, I could give a life to the work, it would not more than express my reverence for the man, and my liking for the art of which he was a master.

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CHAPTER THE FIRST.

THE POTTER'S ART IN BRITAIN—ITS INDIGENOUS CHARACTER—CELTIC POTTERY—ITS FRAGMENTS WIDELY SCATTERED—POTTERY OF THE TUMULI, AND THE INTERESTING OBJECTS FOUND IN CONNECTION WITH IT—ROMAN POTTERIES AND POTTERY—LUSTROUS RED WARE—ITS IMPORTATION—SAXON URNS AND PITCHERS—PREDILECTION OF THE RACE FOR ARTICLES FABRICATED IN WOOD—STAPLES OF WOOD-WORK IN THE MIDDLE AGES—NORMAN POTTERY—ITS ADAPTATION OF, AND SLOW IMPROVEMENT UPON, SAXON TYPES.

CHAPTER I.

THE EARLIEST VARIETIES OF POTTERY.

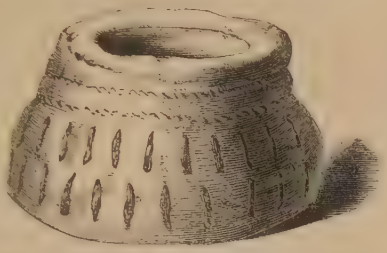
THE Potter's Art in Britain is a subject full of interest and variety. From its rude beginning in most remote ages, to its condition at the present day, it includes countless facts which are vital, picturesque, and highly suggestive. In its industrial, commercial, and artistic relations—in its less obvious connection with the food, condition, and progressive refinement of the people—in its various stages, Celtic, Roman, Saxon, Norman, and Mediæval, till these culminate in modern ceramic art—in the lives of its most eminent English masters—Wedgwood, Spode, and Minton—is to be found no mean or obscure portion of our national history.

The art may be said to be indigenous to our soil, for no country surpasses our own in the extent and variety of the materials found useful by the potter. But for centuries, whilst there was little association of labour, and each native tribe followed its own traditions as to the manipulation of the vessel for funereal or domestic use, or rather, whilst each individual was guided solely by the impulse, convenience, or necessity of the moment, little improvement could take place. The cup dried in the sun, or the urn moulded on the spot, and burnt in the same fire which consumed the dead, was friable, and

easily suffered disintegration. Through this cause alone we have lost much pottery of the archaic type; and though found scattered on the floors of the hut-circles, in caves, and other subterraneous human habitations, it is almost always in that fragmentary condition which precludes much positive knowledge as to its form or the art of its construction. Yet we have every evidence that the more domestic class of pottery was made in considerable quantities during this early period. We find traces of it alike under the solitary mosses north of the Tweed; on the wild moors of Dorsetshire, Devonshire, Cornwall, Northumberland, and Cumberland; amidst the chalk formations of Kent, or the great uplands of Derbyshire and Yorkshire; beneath half-effaced earth-works, and along the course of ancient trackways. With that portion which was buried with its owners, which accompanied the urn holding human ashes, or was placed by the corpse as food-vessels, we are more familiar. It is coarse, hand-moulded; but occasionally, like the urns, well dried in the sun, or hardened in the fire. It may be plain, or, as many of the larger vessels, ornamented with a zigzag or chevron pattern, formed rudely by a sharp stick or flint; and, where indented patterns occur, they were made previously to firing the vessel, by tightly tying a thong round the yet wet and plastic clay.

The urns of this early period are, for the most part, large and roughly formed. Those in the museum of Mr. Warne, of Ewell in Surrey, and taken, within a recent period, from barrows on the wildest parts of the Dorsetshire moors, have an almost Cyclopean rudeness. Formed by the hand from a light-coloured clay, slightly mixed with chalk, they have great thickness, with a broken uneven surface; and though originally so well dried as to

have borne their immense antiquity with few signs of disintegration, to them, as to most other specimens of early ceramic art, may be applied Brongniart's profound remark, that the most ancient pottery is always the most imperfect, because the materials of which it is composed belong to the most recent and superficially-formed clays.[1]



(Fig. 1.) CELTIC INCENSE CUP.—WARNE COLLECTION

The colour of this early pottery varies according to the character of the materials from which it is formed. Light-coloured ware is very much rarer than dark, because ferruginous matter enters so much into the body of ordinary clay. There is also reason to think, from some analyses made at Sèvres, that slight portions of charcoal, as a colouring matter, were artificially introduced during the rude preparation of the clay; and to this may be owing, more than to time, or concealment in the earth, the dark hues so prevalent in Celtic ware. These vary through the different shades of dark grey, red, and brown, to a bluish-black.

(Fig. 2.) CELTIC URN.—WARNE COLLECTION.

The hues of the urns and other Celtic pottery discovered by the late Mr. Bateman in the tumuli of the midland

[1] Traité des Arts Céramiques, tom. i. p. 32.

counties—chiefly in Derbyshire and north and north-eastern Staffordshire—are dark grey, bluish, and an earthy brown. He was of opinion that most of this ware had been more or less fired, and that the term 'sun-dried' is a mistake very evident to all practically acquainted with the readiness with which clay so hardened, imbibes moisture, and returns to its original unctuous state.[1] But his opinion that the potter's wheel was unknown to the Celtæ previously to the Roman period, was invalidated by his own discoveries.[2] No human hand, unassisted by mechanical aid, could have given such regularity of outline as belongs to much of the ware of a purely Celtic type, even where the hand was practised, and of that suppleness and beauty of form said to have been common to many of the Celtic tribes.[3] The potter's wheel in its primitive type is so simple an instrument, as to be self-suggestive to a savage of ordinary intelligence; and our discoveries are proving more and more that, whilst asserting for the pre-historic age an almost entire ignorance of the useful arts, we only show our own. The races who, 2,000 years ago, knew how to smelt ore—as we find they did from very recent discoveries of iron slag within the hut-circles and chambers on the wildest of the Cheviot hills—would be sure to have mastered the first necessary appliances of the potter's art.

None of the Celtic ware is glazed. Dr. Daniel Wilson, in researches made in the south of Scotland, as Mr. Bateman in the tumuli of the midland counties, met with instances where a glaze seemed evident; but very able

[1] Ten Years' Diggings in Celtic and Saxon Grave-hills, p. 280.

[2] Vestiges of Antiquities in Derbyshire, p. 102.

[3] The digital bones found as recently as 1864 in the explorations of a Derbyshire cave, prove that the hands of the Celtæ, generally speaking, were very small.

judges consider these to be accidental exceptions to a universal rule. In a country like Derbyshire, abounding in lead, minute portions of the metal might enter imperceptibly into the clay during the simpler processes of kneading or moulding, and subsequent fusion give the result of a metallic glaze. In Scotland, where rocks abound, mica or other fusible matter might be present in

(Figs. 3, 4.) CELTIC URNS.—BATEMAN COLLECTION.

clay of which vessels had been formed, and yet be unperceived till, in some solitary instance, partial vitrification had ensued from a higher degree of heat during firing. One urn, taken from a Derbyshire tumulus, was found half-filled with mingled lead and gravel; and others in the late Mr. Bateman's Collection have a slightly polished surface—the result, as it would seem, of a bituminous or oily smear.

The most striking fact connected with Celtic pottery is its variety; yet, at the same time, appreciable thread of likeness. In this we seem to have fresh evidence of the

fact that, long prior to the Roman invasion, and through various periods, our island received accession to its population from many other sources besides that of Gaul. Similarity in both the ornamentation and body of the ware would be controlled by many immediate circumstances; but diversity in outline and manipulation was, doubtless, in a great measure owing to a difference both physical and mental in those early potters. One tribe would be comparatively civilised, whilst another was barbarous. A few degrees in latitude or longitude, the boundary of a river, a breadth of forest, a range of hills, a situation far inland, or one on the coast, would give at the same date the strong dissimilarity between archaic pottery, with flint weapons, and vessels of more classic forms, accompanied by the bronze spear or iron knife. Flint and metal weapons have been also found together, and in urns of a single and undisturbed interment, though this but rarely. We also know that one tribe practised inhumation at a date when another was burning its dead. Then came a period when inhumation seems to have been a general usage, followed by another that lasted till the Roman period, through which cremation prevailed; and the urns which held the innocuous ashes were smaller and of more graceful types. To this period, probably, belongs all which is best in Celtic ware —the finely-shaped urns of Wiltshire and Kent—those less elegant from the tumuli of Derbyshire and Staffordshire; and others from the wolds of Yorkshire, which are different, and yet rival, in the grace of their outlines, the urns of the southern coast.

A continuous revelation of facts is proving to us that we must assign to the archaic period not only a very remote antiquity, but that we must greatly antedate man's

comparative civilisation. Though Strabo tells us that the Phœnicians imported earthenware into Britain, it is not less a fact that the great clay beds in the country of the Cornavii, the Broseley clays especially, those in the land of the Durotriges, on the coast of Dorset near the isle of Purbeck, and others at a place now known as Malton in Yorkshire, were extensively wrought at a period long prior to the Roman invasion. It is thus most likely that, besides forming important trackways through the country, along many of which the Romans afterwards stretched their wonderful roads, and founding settlements which under their influence became flourishing cities and important towns, the more civilised tribes then inhabiting Britain laid the germs of many of those great potteries which through the Roman period contributed so much to the wealth, refinement, and comfort of the Romanised Britons. Hitherto through the later Celtic period, such improvements as took place in the potter's art were derived second-hand from distant influence and imitation; but now classic taste and manipulative skill were to mould the varied clays of our land into shapes geometrically perfect and beautiful.

Yet, the pottery of the archaic period, as also much which followed, belongs so truly to the history of our many-nationed race, as to evoke an interest in its rudeness and variety. Moulded beside the brook or river, in the shadows of dense forests, or high up on solitary moors; in the glowing season of summer, or under the leaden skies of winter; burnt in the funereal pyre, or within the rude kiln; filled with the ashes of the dead, or holding the flint arrow-tip, the war paint,[1] the quartz stone, or

[1] Ten Years' Diggings in Celtic and Saxon Grave-hills, by Thomas Bateman, p. 169.

else the bronze dagger and the necklace of Kimmeridge jet; placed by the outstretched or half-recumbent skeleton, in company with those of the wife, the child, the fellow-man; the skull of the faithful dog, the horns of the wild bull, or the mighty antlers of the red deer; the human skeleton resting sometimes on fern leaves, impressions of which yet remained; or enveloped in some hide, the hairy covering of which was yet visible when the barrow-digger opened the silent grave of centuries;[1] this pottery, that for countless generations had lain hidden beneath cairns of wonderful construction, or tumuli so large as to be landmarks of a country, and this amidst scenes of mountain, wood, and stream, which then, as now, were the glory of our land, must necessarily interest us, as being the handiwork of primeval man. It is, as it were, a ghost out of antique time, which speaks where so much else is silent; and which, in connection with kindred relics, and the proofs they offer, will yet serve as materials from whence to draw generalisations of value and significance.

Long before the close of the third century, numerous potteries, some of them on a most extensive scale, were scattered over Roman Britain. For, at a period when wood was abundant, and used in all those processes of the potter's art in which heat is required, it was easy to take advantage of a locality where clay abounded.[2] Other causes governed their variety and productiveness. The legionaries, and those who may be termed the controlling force of the subjugated country, were potters by nature.

[1] Ibid. pp. 34–35.

[2] This opinion has been confirmed by Mr. Wise, in his recent work on 'The New Forest.' 'The reason why the Romans chose the forest for their potteries is obvious, not for its fertility, but because it supplied wood to fire the kilns—the same cause which centuries after made Yarranton select Ringwood for his smelting furnaces.'—P. 224.

As Dr. Daniel Wilson has ably shown, wherever the legionaries penetrated, even in districts of Scotland where easily-wrought stone was abundant, they in preference made bricks and tiles for all the necessary purposes of defence and shelter. At a date still later, when Britain had become thoroughly Romanised by the introduction of large bodies of auxiliary troops, by the presence of a still greater number of educated civilians, and by the deportation of the native population into legions serving at remote distances, this idiosyncrasy is still more apparent. The potter's art was made available for almost every purpose—for the floors, roofs, and wall ornamentation of houses; for the construction of flues and drains; and for every conceivable culinary and domestic service. Where the Saxon used wood, copper, or bronze, and later generations other appliances, the Romanised Briton used earthenware even more than bronze or iron. He also betokened his comparatively high civilisation by the use of a triturated and a macerated food. This is shown by the immense number of mortaria, or vessels for pounding and mixing, and by the patera or dish, which when small assumed much of the form of our modern saucer. In fact, food in its deficiency or abundance, in its quality as well as use, has throughout most of the stages of human civilisation held intimate relation with ceramic art. The Gaulish races, from all that history has recorded, were ravenous and barbarous in their feasts; and it is not unlikely that the domestic pottery then in use was confined to vessels for holding liquids, or in which to seethe or otherwise cook food. Tumular excavations have shed some light upon this subject. From these we derive the facts that, for a considerable period, whilst beasts of the chase were numerous, and flesh

consequently abundant, the teeth, even in aged adults, were little worn; but when animal food was scarce or unprocurable, parched or coarsely-ground corn, berries, and other wild fruits had to be substituted; and hence arose a great detrition in the teeth, even in the young. The same circumstances in relation to a subsequent period have been observed by explorers in the Saxon barrows. With the Romanised Britons it was different. They used for the most part a well-cooked, softened, and varied food, in which broths, stews, and pulpy messes prevailed; their culinary art stimulated that of the potter; and their crania, whether it be some noble skull, as that of Theodorianus of York,[1] or of some humbler citizen or craftsman, give ample proofs of this advance in our insular civilisation.

The potteries were as numerous as they were widely spread. There were at least two, if not three, in Kent: one on the Medway of great extent near Upchurch; another on the south coast at Dymchurch. Some writers assert that a third existed near Reculver, on a spot now covered by the sea; but the evidence is not sufficiently conclusive. Londinium had at least two or three just without the walls, and another across the river, in the vicinity of Ermin Street. Essex had several potteries; and on the site of that which stood without the walls of Camulodunum (Colchester), both kilns and vessels have been found *in situ*.[2] There were others in Buckinghamshire, Dorsetshire, Wiltshire, and Hampshire. There were potteries in Norfolk and Cambridgeshire, two in Essex, and more than one of importance in Lincolnshire. Yorkshire, from the abundance and excellence of its clay, was a veri-

[1] Crania Britannica, Decade I.
[2] Collectanea Antiqua, vol. ii. p. 36, and vol. vi.

table pottery district. There were kilns in the immediate neighbourhood of York, and the potteries of the Cleveland district seem to have been on an extensive scale, chiefly producing a most valuable red as well as grey ware.[1] The ornamentation of some of this is styled a 'frill' pattern, or rather a pattern of raised scales overlapping each other; but by far the larger portion is plain. The forms

(Figs. 5, 6.) FRILLED PATTERNS, YORK.—ROMANO-BRITISH WARE.

are extremely varied and elegant, and, where mouldings are introduced, as round the curves of the saucer-like paterae, they show a high degree of manipulative skill, as also the use of the lathe. This ware seems to have been used over a considerable tract of country, though not so universally as the Upchurch pottery, which has been found in almost every Romano-British site.

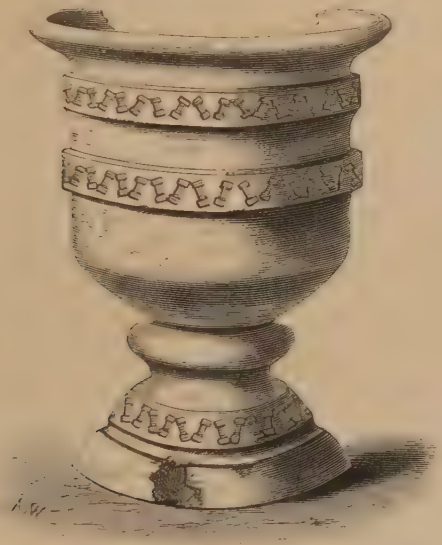
The Shropshire clays were, as already stated, extensively worked from a very remote period. Ware made from them has been found in considerable quantities at Wroxeter;[2] and occasionally it is recognised in places

[1] Wellbeloved's Eburacum, p. 126.

[2] Mr. Thursfield is of opinion 'That the white pottery found at Wroxeter is made of a different quality of clay to that of Broseley, but no one, I believe, knows exactly where it was obtained.' (Reliquary, vol. iii. p. 79.) On the other hand, it is an undoubted fact that the Shropshire clays were wrought from a period of the most remote antiquity, and this for the purpose of forming articles for mortuary purposes and domestic use.

remote from its own neighbourhood, as specimens have been dug up in the vale of Harrow and elsewhere. Of the Roman potteries in Staffordshire little is known. Kilns of great antiquity have been uncovered from time to time in various parts of the country, more particularly on the sites and in the neighbourhood of the modern Potteries; but there is no distinct type of ware, as in the cases of Upchurch, Castor, and York. We know, however, that much common red ware was produced there, as in all those other districts where ferruginous clays abounded, and from the vicinity of this to several important Roman towns and stations—Mediolanum (Chesterton), Mancunium (Manchester), and Etocetum (Wall) amongst others. The approximation of three, if not four, great trackways or roads which led variously across the kingdom, and the abundance not only of many descriptions of clay, but also of fuel in the vast surrounding woods, will lead us to the probable conclusion that the Romano-British potteries of Staffordshire were not only of some extent, but may have had origin in a period anterior to Roman conquest and occupation. From time to time, during the past century, much common red ware has been dug up at Wroxeter, which with great probability may be referred to the Romano-British potteries of Staffordshire, as it has neither the brightness of colour, nor the compactness and hardness of body, of the ware of the Cleveland district. Many of the objects thus found are of considerable size, and undoubtedly copies as to form of the pseudo-Samian, or lustrous red ware, exported to this country from the potteries of central Gaul or the shores of the Rhine. In a garden at Wroxeter is a vase of this ware, which was dug up in an adjacent field about the year 1845. Its form is uncommon, though prototypes

are to be found in the rarer collections of lustrous red ware, for it stands upon a low pedestal, and a slightly-flanged curve or lip encircles the vessel. The curious fact, however, is, that a perforated and lidded flower-pot, greatly like it, and in Wedgwood-ware, was common on the mantel-shelves of Staffordshire and Shropshire some half-century ago. Mr. Wedgwood was constantly receiving the loan of specimens of Romano-



(Fig. 7.) URN FROM WROXETER.

British and other native pottery from his friend Major Hayman Rooke, the antiquary; and it is not unlikely that similar discoveries were made on the same site in his day, and that a specimen or sketch of the pottery reached his hand. At least there is similarity in form. As we progress in the life of this illustrious man, and in the history of his works, we shall have evidence of his friendly correspondence with more than one

eminent antiquary of the eighteenth century; and we shall see that, like other men of great original capacity, he despised no source, however heterogeneous or seemingly remote, from which he could derive information, or which was likely to suggest to him forms that he might gracefully adapt. It would be another singular instance of the past serving the present if, after its burial of some 1,300 or 1,400 years, a vase moulded by a Romano-British potter should have served as a model for a far greater master of the same art, and of the same district of Britain.

A glance at a map of Roman Britain will show that the larger potteries were situated in the vicinity of rivers, such as the Nen, the Medway, and the Severn; on the line of important roads, or within easy distance of them. The pottery of each peculiar district was thus distributed by the agency of water-carriage or mule-traffic over the large tract of country south of the wall of Hadrian; and whilst the black ware of Upchurch and the relief ware of Northamptonshire supplied places as distant as York, Colchester, Bath, Wroxeter, and Caerleon, there is reason to think that the pottery of the Cleveland district found its way to Londinium and the towns of the south. The ware seems to have been transported in panniers swung to the sides of mules,[1] precisely as pottery was conveyed from town to town in the midland districts not fifty years ago; and where these tracks passed over a hilly or moorland region the same are in use at the present day. They are yet to be traced across the Longmynd hills in Shropshire, where it was not uncommon some thirty years ago, and whilst summer or autumnal skies lighted the wild

[1] An example is given in Collectanea Antiqua, vol. vi. pl. XIII., from a clay *figurine* found in France.

and lonely landscape, to see a string of rough ponies or asses passing down in single file the steep escarpments, each pannier laden with black-glazed or ruddy-coloured ware from the smaller pot-works of Staffordshire and Shropshire.

The discoveries which have been made on the great pottery sites in Kent and Northamptonshire, prove upon what a large scale these works were carried on, and under what a severe censorship as to form and detail, if many of the entire vessels found on the Nen, as also in the creeks of the Medway, be in reality the refuse of the kilns. Accuracy is, as we know, a necessary portion of all true art; it is, in fact, truth in its material expression, and was studied far more by the old than by the modern ceramists. Wedgwood exercised this office of censor in a marked degree, never allowing a set of dishes, basins, or plates to pass out of his works unless they 'nested' or fitted well; or a vase to leave the thrower's bench unless its outline was geometrically perfect: and though he was not always seconded by the zeal and conscientiousness of his workmen—as we shall find in relation to ware exported to continental states—yet it was in the whole this inflexibility of truth and purpose in all which related to his art, as much as his ideality and absolute perfection of vision, which won him his great and lasting fame.

A long sweep of marshland—not very level, but broken by clumpy hillocks, and intersected by narrow creeks filled with sea-water and influenced by the tide—is the scene at this day of the Roman potteries on the Medway. Pleasant uplands are in the rear. Some village peeps out from without its little wilderness of surrounding trees, or a row of cottages, or an outlying barn stands bare and

exposed in the foreground; but otherwise the impression is one of mute loneliness and intense stillness, except for the creeping gurgle of the tide as it recedes or advances, or the sweep of the wind through the reeds and tall grass upon the hillocks. Yet anciently it was covered by a busy throng of workers, their sheds, pits, kilns, and piles of charcoal, as the potteries extended from Otterham Creek[1] to Lower Halstow, a distance of from two to three miles, whilst traces of the potters have been found much farther on towards Sheerness. The whole ground through the first-named district, and at about three feet below the level of the soil, is one vast 'shord ruck,' for at low water the fragments of broken pottery can be pulled out from the banks of the creeks in countless number. They have formed portions of vases, amphoræ, pateræ, and other vessels, usually of small size, and bearing evidence of the lathe, as also the use of the compasses and other pointed instruments in the elaboration of the fine indented lines and half-circles which form the ordinary patterns of this ware. Whole vessels are found in the creeks at low water, imbedded in the mud and clay, as though washed down from higher levels, and on these occasional traces of what appears to be gilding are to be seen, though they disappear as the vessel dries.[2] It was probably not gilding in our received sense of the term, but some evanescent oxide *like* gilding. Many of the forms are very beautiful, displaying that use of the ellipsis so common in ancient art,

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[1] A view and map of this district appear in the Collectanea Antiqua, vol. vi., in illustration of Mr. Roach Smith's Remains of 'Roman Potteries.'

[2] The interesting fact is derived from information personally given by the Rev. John Woodruff, rector of Upchurch, whose collection of Romano-British ware derived from this site is extensive. The leading types are given in Collectanea Antiqua, vol. vi.

whilst the excessive lightness and hardness of the ware, even after its centuries of exposure to the ebb and flow of the

(Figs. 8, 9.) UPCHURCH WARE.

sea, are proofs of great care and skill in the preparation of the clay, as also in its subsequent firing. When dry, this lightness and hardness of body are still more perceptible, and, considering that it is simply earthenware and not porcelain, the result is very striking. Both effects were probably derived from its peculiar firing in what Mr. Artis

(Fig. 10.) CASTOR WARE.

called 'smother kiln,' in which the wood smoke at a certain degree of heat was returned upon the ware. The

blue-black colour likewise of this and the Castor pottery was the result of the same process, as the Upchurch clay is ferruginous and naturally burns red; whilst the Castor is blue, though turning somewhat white in the fire. But the colour thus artificially produced has no real permanence, as it escapes in a second firing.[1] The ancients seem to have had a predilection for dark-toned wares, as the large majority of pottery found on Romano-British sites is black, and it was thus as extensively used as willow-pattern ware in our own day. Within a recent period some elegant chimney ornaments have been made at Burslem of the Upchurch clay,[2] and the result, both in colour and fineness of body, is a proof, amongst a thousand others, that all the best natural resources of the country, so far as they could be then known, were sought and made use of by those who were its rulers.

The potteries at Castor in Northamptonshire were still more extensive than those of the Medway, as they were traced by the late Mr. Artis for full twenty miles along the marshy banks of the river Nen, and he calculated that they must have employed at least 2,000 workmen at one time. In his researches, he came upon almost perfect kilns, and thus discovered the process by which the colour of the clay was changed during firing.[3] Each layer of vessels in these kilns was, it seems, covered in with coarse grass and clay, and when the whole mass was thus proof against the emission of smoke, it was fired with wood. M. Tudot, in more recent researches in

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[1] Illustrations of Roman London, p. 82.

[2] From the Sharpness Marshes, the property of Mr. Humphry Wickham.

[3] Mr. Artis's Durobrivis, in which some are figured, is unfortunately without letterpress; but examples of the kilns with descriptions, supplied to his friend Mr. Roach Smith, will be found in the Collectanea Antiqua, vol. vi.

France, came upon similar kilns, though his descriptions answer rather to the muffles used at the present day in enamelling porcelain than to those uncovered in Northamptonshire.

Considering that the so-called Samian, or red lustrous ware, was imported into this country, the Castor pottery, as also a variety from kilns in the vicinity of Lincoln, was that on which the Romano-British potters expended their greatest art. Elegant in form, in some cases indented, the larger portion was covered with a sort of ornamental relief work, caused by trailing a thick slip

(Figs. 11, 12.) CASTOR WARE.

upon the ware whilst in its green or slightly dried state. Where the slip was the colour of the body, the two were glazed together, but where the ornamentation was white, the glazing took place previous to its application.[1]

[1] The ware of the Romano-British potteries in Hampshire seems to have been simply a less perfect variation of Castor ware.

Oxide of iron seems to have formed the ordinary glaze, and hunting scenes interspersed with foliated ornaments, scrolls, fishes, and human figures, armed singly or in combat, were the patterns more generally depicted. Examples of this ware, Mr. Roach Smith states, have been met with in France, Belgium, Holland, and Flanders.[1]

Other kinds of pottery have been found on Romano-British sites of which we know but little.[2] One variation is striped black and yellow; another is of a yellowish-white with a green glaze, generally in the form of pitchers, which appears to have carried on its thread of likeness far into the Middle Ages, yet in its origin it is undoubtedly Roman, as it has been found at York, Carlisle, and other places, fifteen feet beneath the soil, and mingled with the fragments of Samian ware.[3] Another sort of urn or jug, of brownish-red ware and foreign manufacture, is occasionally found on Roman sites, which from its ornamented mouth, usually a female head, is probably the prototype of a class of drinking vessels popular in the Middle Ages, and of which the terra-cotta moulds for forming the ornamental heads have been found at Lincoln. It is not unlikely that discoveries on the site of Roman Lincoln, as in similar places, furnished the general idea of this ware to the potters of the fourteenth century.

Though undoubtedly possessing the materials for its fabrication, Britain, from all which is known on the subject, imported, from central Gaul and the shores of the Rhine, the immense abundance of red lustrous pottery found in

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[1] Collectanea Antiqua, vol. iv. pp. 81–82, and Plates XXI. to XXIV.

[2] That manufactured at a pottery in the neighbourhood of Lincoln is somewhat similar to the Castor ware, though varied by metalloid colours, produced in the firing, and often very beautiful.

[3] Wellbeloved's Eburacum, p. 125.

every direction on the levels of Roman occupation. One site, however, has been referred to as a probable place of manufacture in this country, and this is on a portion of the Kentish coast off Herne Bay, and near Reculver, the ancient Regulbium. Here Samian ware has been from time to time dredged up by fishermen. In 1778, when the first discovery was made, traces of Roman brickwork were also visible. The estuary of the Thames has undergone considerable alteration since the period of Roman occupation. The Medway was then narrower, and perhaps less broken into channels, and here, on some island or section of coast-line now wholly submerged, a pottery may have existed, though the evidence in favour of it is very doubtful.

The principal source from whence this ware (the red lustrous) was derived is now with almost absolute certainty referred to the department of Auvergne and the valley of the Allier in central France, though kilns and stamps have been found at Tours, Bordeaux, in the neighbourhood of Strasburg, and other places. It seems, as in the case of the Etruscan vases, to be strictly confined to a particular zone, and never found beyond this, though, whether the result of excavations in France, Germany, or England, the ware has the same characteristic of lustre, density, and brilliant colour.

The most important discoveries connected with this manufacture are of quite recent date. In 1856, the lower portions of a variety of vases were found soldered together in a field at Toulon, a village near Moulins-sur-Allier, in the department of the Bourbonnais; and since then, elaborate explorations by the late M. Tudot and others have proved that the potters of the valley of the Allier carried on their manufacture over a vast tract of

country, for a long period, and on an extensive scale, not only of small figures in white clay, which were largely imported into this country, but also of red lustrous ware.[1] What is equally curious, just as in the case of the Northamptonshire and Staffordshire potteries in our own country, more ancient kilns were found beneath those of the second and third centuries. Clay, wood, and moulds were also uncovered, but neither tools nor implements; though M. Brongniart mentions cases in which punches, chisels, styles, even spatula-like spoons, for forming a certain class of designs, as well as other little instruments in copper and ivory, were found in contiguity with moulds and ovens.[2]

We may therefore reasonably conclude that the major part of the red lustrous ware used in this country was derived from this source; though there is a rarer sort still, which was the product of the potteries of Arretium and other places in Italy, as well as of Saguntum in Spain. Of this the relief work was separately formed and luted to the vessels with slip, instead of being the result of moulds into which the body had been pressed. This rarer description of embossed ware is in the highest style of art. Amongst specimens discovered on the site of Roman London, and now in the British Museum, are some that have almost the perfection of antique cameos, and which, if ground by the lapidary and set, would form exquisite ornaments. The plain red lustrous ware embraces every variety of form; but the embossed is rigidly confined to upright and bowl-shaped vessels. Of these a few instances have occurred, in which the

[1] M. Tudot's curious discoveries are reviewed and commented on in Collectanea Antiqua, vol. vi.

[2] Traité des Arts Céramiques, vol. i. p. 424.

patterns are incuse instead of in relief; but the specimens are fragmentary, and of extraordinary rarity. In these, as in most of the other branches of ancient art, the designs show an exhaustless fertility of invention—a proof in itself that the artist drew upon the sources of his own original ideas, instead of merely reproducing the creations of others. Yet, with regard to the commoner

(Figs. 13, 14.) SAMIAN BOWLS.—ROACH SMITH COLLECTION.

types of embossed ware, the stamps and moulds vary more in application than in a variation of the designs themselves. The figures, which in this bowl rest amidst foliated gracefulness, are in the next separated by columnar partitions, or by an egg and tongue bordering. This continuous use of the same stamps and moulds in endless variation takes from the embossment, on much of the commoner ware, all sharpness of outline. Mythological subjects form

a large majority of designs, whilst others undoubtedly give to us reduced copies of celebrated statues and sections of bas-reliefs. It is with the foliated patterns and edgings, however, that the variety and originality are alike surprising. Here, as in the borders of wall-paintings uncovered at Herculaneum and Pompeii, is to be found a perfect treasure-house for the modern designer ;[1] and had collections of this beautiful ware been as numerous a century ago as they are at present, they would have certainly contributed to that variety of edge-decoration which Wedgwood sought at almost every available source of antique art—in the pictured antiquities of Count de Caylus, in the Etruscan urns brought over by Sir William Hamilton, in gems which, as he truly considered, are the purest fountains of art, or in casts of sculptured decorations made at great cost in Rome. He fabricated red ware in considerable quantities, and painted certain portions of it with black figures, after the antique; and very beautiful it is, whether in the shape of vases or tea-services. His son, Josiah Wedgwood, also copied successfully, in 1808, some red ware taken by Sir Richard Colt Hoare from Wiltshire barrows. But from his preference for unvarnished bodies, and hindered perhaps by his many occupations, the elder Wedgwood seems never to have made any experiments in relation to that wonderful glaze, which now, at the distance of near 2,000 years, shines as brilliantly as on the day it was first spread over the vessels it adorns.

Analyses, even at the instance of profound chemists like Reaumur and Brongniart, have failed in giving any very distinct idea as to its components. Chaptal states,

[1] The Illustrations of Roman London, by Mr. Roach Smith, contain nearly one hundred varieties.

that he never found either lead or copper in the varnish of Greek or Roman pottery, and that ware thus glazed is of a subsequent date. Experiments made at Sèvres give for this lustre, when entirely free from paste, silica, oxide of iron, and lime, in various proportions; and the intensity of its polish seems derived from partial vitrification. The lustre is in fact a fine coating of silicate, and seems in itself to have been devoid of colour, but set off by that of the paste, which was coloured with red ochre. It is thus a true porcelain glaze, and was applied by a brush, or the emersion of the ware; as in the case of a cup-shaped vessel discovered on the level of Roman London, the inside had been left unvarnished.[1]

The Romano-British population highly prized this ware, common as must have been its use, as in numerous instances vessels broken, and afterwards carefully united, have been found. At a subsequent date it occasionally formed part of the Saxon funereal deposits, and it was amongst the coveted spoils of the predatory Vikings, who are supposed to have borne many rich vessels of this ware across the North Sea. We may also be certain that it was known, as well as appreciated, during the Middle Ages, by a member here and there of the monastic bodies, as the tillage of the land, as also the common custom of making every Roman building of import a quarry for the neighbourhood, must have necessarily brought much of it to light. A vast portion undoubtedly perished in those ages of superstitious ignorance. Yet here and there must surely have been an ecclesiastic, sufficiently well taught, to know something of classic art and its offshoots in a later age; and who, when the exquisite

[1] Catalogue of Museum of C. Roach Smith, p. 25.

Arretine bowl or gently-curved patera was brought before him, would command its preservation in the refectory or in the abbot's parlour. There is reason to think this was done, for mediæval art borrowed in more than one direction from antique art. Many of the elaborate borders and initial letters in missal painting were indebted to classical sources for some of their best efforts, although they were too often spoilt by grotesque additions. In digging amidst the foundations of many of the more important monasteries, and in situations where there existed no signs of previous Roman occupation, fragments of red lustrous ware have been found. Portions of a magnificent embossed bowl were dug up some years ago within the ruined area of the abbot's parlour at Haughmond Abbey in Shropshire; and numerous other instances are familiar to those versed in mediæval literature and county histories. In this particular instance the bowl had been undoubtedly obtained from the site of Uriconium, which lay in the immediate vicinity. Vessels thus preserved and transferred at the Reformation to other owners, form probably part of those now found in special collections, or scattered as single specimens in private hands. 'The great beauty of form and colour,' remarks Mr. Roach Smith, 'as well as the excellence of the Roman red lustrous pottery, must have caused it to be used and prized for centuries after its manufacture had ceased. It is not an uncommon incident to find a specimen here and there in cottages and country houses in Kent.'[1] The same may be observed in other districts of England.

The Saxons, as they slowly fought their way into the possession of this country, appear to have utilised its

[1] Inventorium Sepulchrale, p. 74, note.

resources so far as their civilisation admitted. As they took the Roman towns, and in the great majority of instances converted them to their own use—as they traversed Roman highways, and merely changed the names—as they used Roman burial-grounds as well as Celtic tumuli—as they wrought the metallic riches of the country—for the warsmith and the goldsmith stood high as craftsmen amongst them—so in a degree the tile-wright's art was made effective. Yet the Romano-British potters, though mingled with and enslaved amongst the general population, persisted in their own style and handicraft; as the Saxon burial urns, so long as paganism lasted, are feebly modelled after Roman types. To the close of this period also the Romano-British potteries may have lingered, though gradually sinking into decadence, through the long and gloomy interval which elapsed before the light of civilisation again shone. For the Saxon urns of Kent, Northamptonshire, and Yorkshire, often show, whilst resembling each other in form as well as decoration, with the singular exception of the mortuary urns of Kent, traces both in colour and body, of having been derived from the great local potteries respectively at hand. As an instance, the majority of the cinerary urns found by the Rev. Bryan Faussett in the Saxon barrows of Kent, are black, as though derived from the still existing remains of potteries near Upchurch on the Medway.[1] But with the extinction of paganism and the disuse of the old methods of burial, the earth-vessels deposited in graves with corpses, if rude in form, assume a new character. They show a greater diversity in manipulation, as though the result of individual, rather than general,

[1] The urns which held burnt bones were usually found in fragments, indicating earlier burials.

manufacture. Many of these urns, in addition to stamped patterns, have knobs or bosses, caused by pressing out the sides of the urns whilst in a soft state, or otherwise by sticking solid lumps of clay round the body of the vessel. In some cases the knobs are single. Such urns were, in fact, utensils of ordinary usage, rather than those made especially to hold the ashes of the dead. They often contained such personal effects as combs, tweezers, coins, or ornaments. But it is in jug-shaped vessels, common alike to the Anglo-Saxon as to the Frankish remains, that we begin to see the indications of a new style of pottery, and one utterly dissimilar to anything Roman. They are found in Germany, Frankish Gaul, and more rarely in England; and though homely in form and coarse in fabric, prefigure a vast class of pottery in daily and hourly use through all the succeeding centuries to our own.

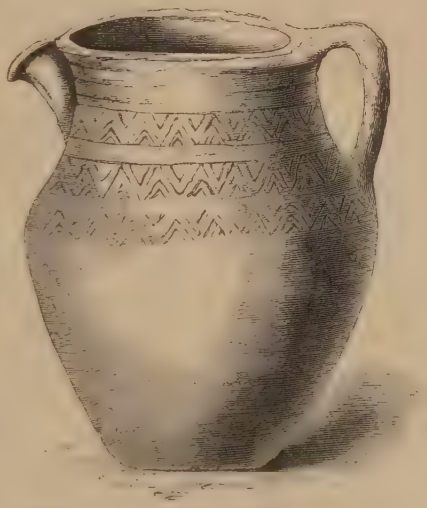
(Fig. 15.) SAXON URN.

(Fig. 16.) SAXON URN.

But whilst the great potteries of their adopted country

thus sank into disuse, and thence into utter oblivion, the Saxons had yet recourse to the potter. He made jugs and porringers, as also, there is reason to think, coarse dishes, formed of a thick slab of clay made slightly concave; for this kind of dish is still produced in the common pot-works of most of our counties, and seems, from sherds which have been found, to have been a type of vessel in use through countless generations. But the tilewright's craft was local. It supplied the wants of the tithing, or hundred, or the thane's hall, but no more; and the allotment and tenure of land governed, in some measure, the settling down of these homely trades. The pipkin for the embered hearth, or the tile-vat for the hall, was not sought at a distance, as during the Roman period, but was fabricated on the nearest available spot. The food was solid, coarsely cooked, and rudely separated; and if we may trust to the illuminations of the period, the meat was served on the spit, from which each man carved and ate his portion. Numerous vessels were thus unnecessary, except for the mead and the ale, and for these the Saxons used vessels

(Fig. 17.) SAXON PITCHER.



(Fig. 18.) SAXON PITCHER.

of horn, wood, and glass, as well as the earth-vat, or jar of the potter.

In respect to the great use of wood for almost every purpose, something more than a mere profusion of material or its accessibility, has to be considered. The early homes of the great Teutonic races had been for the most part confined to the gloom of woods, or to the coast-line of rough seas. They loved the one, as much as the other. The vast forests of our land were one of its attractions; and they gratified an idiosyncrasy in making these their own. They squatted down in woods or on their borders in preference to more open land, and to this date we may probably refer the settlement of population in many fresh districts. Thus accessible, wood was used for every purpose. The Saxon made his spear-shaft from the ash, his shield of the linden tree, and his sword-sheath of mingled wood and leather. The mead and the ale were brought into the thane's hall in the ashen bucket, which, when he died, was often buried with him ; and the ceorl found the log for his pillow and the wood for his beechen bowl or platter close at hand. The derivation of many of our patronymic names shows this abundant use of wood—Cartwright, Arkwright, Shipwright, Wainwright, Woodwright, Pillbeam, and others—the word pill being still used in one or more of our north-western counties in its signification of to strip or open ; and the pillbeam was one who stripped the bark from the trees for the use of the woodwright or charcoal-burner.

This craft in woodwork of so many kinds occupied not only an important place during the Saxon period, but also through the Middle Ages. As the great mass of the population became emancipated, and with it their social conditions improved, staples of woodwork located themselves

in districts where certain kinds of trees abounded; and from these the great fairs and neighbouring towns were supplied. From one district came stools, ponderous chairs, or bread-arks; from another, bowls, trenchers, spinning-wheels, and cradles; and to this day in many parts of England curious traces of these old handicrafts are to be found. Derbyshire was famous for its spinning-wheels, Yorkshire for its bread-arks, and Shropshire for beechen trenchers, cherrywood chairs, and stools. This taste of the Saxons and their descendants was not confined to their adopted country. Those from whom they had sprung had the same predilection. Wooden platters, cups, jugs, bowls, pails, shoes, and even candlesticks, have been found in the graves of the Alemanni in Suabia and other parts of Germany; and the inhabitants of the Black Forest still greatly affect the use of wooden bowls and platters, and maintain their reputation as expert carvers and turners in wood.[1]

From the modern platter, thus so common and ancient in its use, our modern plate is clearly derived, though it seems that the earliest form of the platter or trencher was square. It is still used in remote parts of the country, and is yet the table ware of many of our old foundations. The Romans seem to have had no pottery of this form. The patera or shallow saucer-like vessel is the nearest approach to it; and though plates are occasionally spoken of, pateræ are clearly meant.[2] In a discovery of Roman remains made at Mount Bures near Colchester, plates, it is

[1] Collectanea Antiqua, vol. iv. p. 210.

[2] 'In one case (says Sir Charles Lyell), M. Boucher de Perthes, in his excavations at Abbeville, observed several large flat dishes of Roman pottery lying in a horizontal position in the peat, the shape of which must have prevented them from sinking or penetrating through the underlying peat.' (Antiquity of Man, pp. 110, 111.) These dishes were doubtless large shallow pateræ, as those wholly flat or of the salver form would be more liable to sink than those slightly concave.

said, were found, together with bowls and amphoræ, but they were in reality shallow pateræ of small size, and of local and imperfect manufacture.[1] Sir William Gell records the finding of seven glazed plates packed in straw at Pompeii; but pateræ may be meant, rather than anything answerable to our received notion of a small circular piece of earthenware made slightly concave. M. Tudot, in his discoveries at Toulon near Moulins-sur-Allier, has plates in his list of red lustrous ware,[2] and one of the wall paintings uncovered at Herculaneum represents a nymph or Hebe descending with a salver or plate of fruit, but these are of extremely rare occurrence. The form of the plate was known to the Chinese, and our first European variation of it, of any mark, seems to have been introduced by the Moors; but our own rude earthen plates were made at first with a mere clay beading instead of a rim, and it was not till the time of Wedgwood, or shortly before, that any great alteration was effected in this primitive form.

The generic title of 'Tigelwyrtena-Cræft,' or the tilewright's craft, included, there is much reason to think, every rude utensil or vessel of clay, as well as bricks and tiles, in its manufacture. It is necessary to bear this in mind, as during the Middle Ages the various municipal laws, regulating the making and sale of tiles, clearly include other descriptions of pottery. But it was probably in the towns or their vicinity, rather than in the country districts, that the potter's art was better understood and practised; for here small bodies or guilds may have wrought in association as did the smiths and others. Many of the old Saxon towns have their tilewrights', or, as the

[1] Collectanea Antiqua, vol. ii. p. 36.

[2] Collection de Figurines en Argile, &c., p. 85.

Normans afterwards changed it, potters' gate; and many villages have still the affix of 'potter' to their name. Norwich has its Potters' Gate, in the vicinity of which was clay so good as to be exported to Holland during the Middle Ages; and we have the village of Potter's Bar in Hertfordshire, Potters' Street in Buckinghamshire, Tilehurst in the same county, and many others, indicating the sites of old potteries.

The Saxon tilewrights used one or more glazes, and these, probably, metalliferous in their nature; and porcelain, in the shape of beads, was worn by the females of higher rank. From whence derived we know not; but it leads us to the conjecture that vessels of porcelain were not unknown to the higher classes. King Ethelwulf and King Alfred in their visits to Rome, and the Italian ecclesiastics in their embassies to this country, may have brought it thence; for Sir William Gell was of opinion that the myrrhine vases of antiquity have been successfully traced to China; and only recently we find, from Venetian coins included in the Kirwee prize-money, that Southern Europe traded with the East, centuries before the Portuguese had doubled the Cape. Through this channel many oriental luxuries may have reached Venice and Rome, and thence found their way into more northern latitudes.

Though the Normans affected a greater refinement of manners, and a greater splendour in the appliances of daily life, there is no reason to think that their pottery was other than that used and fabricated by the Saxons. From the Bayeux tapestry we gather, that the tables of the higher classes were spread with platters and bowls, though these may have been of silver or of wood, and we also observe that by this period the serving of meat on

the spit had been discontinued. But the terms on which the Normans acquired this country must have crushed for a time improvement even in the most homely trades. The burgher servilely working at the baron's bidding, or the villein toiling on from day to day in hopeless bondage, would do his work with the least amount of pains; though, as soon as the one, in conjunction with his fellow townsmen, had wrung from his oppressor the charter permitting him to work uncontrolled, so he paid his dues; and the other had struggled effectually and become free; self-interest, and the competitive spirit incident to each stage of civilisation, would affect, beneficially, the poorest and lowest handicrafts. There was talent enough existing; for the Saxon had constructive skill, and the Norman exquisite taste; but both were latent except in such directions as the spirit of the age called forth. It was the smith, the armourer, and the mason, whose services were sought for, not the domestic potter; but even here, in the only direction his ability could show itself, as a maker of tiles for ecclesiastical purposes, we shall presently see how vastly he excelled. Still, there was improvement. The rude porringer or dish might be made as heretofore, but the jug for the great hall must display the workman's skill. He formed it accordingly after the wonted type; but for its decoration he resorted to the traditions of his art, and by modelling a fine slip upon the body of the vessel previous to glazing, he formed the fleur-de-lis, or his lord's armorial bearings. Examples of this character are preserved in museums. On green-glazed pitchers of the thirteenth century, found in various parts of York, are two on which is severally depicted a stag with heraldic devices, and a man with a straight sword encountering a lion rampant, as on the seal of Roger de Quincey, con-

stable of Scotland.[1] A recent discovery has afforded a still richer example of Norman fictile art. On the site of an ancient pottery uncovered at Duffield near Derby, a large amount of earthenware of the Norman period was

(Fig. 19.) NORMAN PITCHER WITH HERALDIC DEVICE.—BATEMAN COLLECTION.

found, consisting chiefly of pitchers, small jugs, porringers, and dishes. All the vessels had been spoilt in the firing, and the majority were glazed. The larger pitchers had foliated handles, and amongst them was one sixteen inches high. It was decorated with five horseshoes and two buckles, the distinctive badge of the family of Ferrars, Earls of Ferrars, of Derby and of Nottingham, who held Duffield Castle from the time of the Conquest to the reign of Henry III., 1216–1272, when the lands were confiscated.[2] This unique and fine example, as well as fragments of other highly and curiously ornamented pitchers found at

[1] MS. additions to list of mediæval pottery in the collection of the late Thomas Bateman, Esq., of Lombardale.

[2] Reliquary, vol. ii. p. 218.

the same time, prove that the potter's art was at this period far from being in the degraded state it is generally supposed. The Normans were indebted to the Saxons for many domestic usages and appliances. These they adopted and improved upon; and the long period from the

(Fig. 20.) NORMAN PITCHER WITH ARMORIAL BEARINGS.

Conquest to the end of the fifteenth century was one of gradual, if slow, progress. The races became blended into one; and the renaissance of art in the glories of mediæval architecture, and its accessories of stained glass, tile work, silver work, and wood carving, gave proof enough that, as wealth increased, and the habits of the people improved, so would also those appliances which administer to domestic comfort and refinement.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

TILES AND BRICKS—THE BEAUTY OF MEDIÆVAL TILEWORK—KILNS BELONGING TO THE ENGLISH ABBEYS—FIVE DISTINCT CLASSES OF TILES—METHODS OF MANUFACTURE—THE RELATION OF TILEWORK TO GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE—CONTINENTAL WARE OF THE PERIOD—MAJOLICA WARE—MANY PLACES OF ITS MANUFACTURE CELEBRATED IN THE CLASSIC AGES—PALISSY WARE—USE OF EARTHENWARE IN ENGLAND DURING THE MIDDLE AGES—GREAT MISCONCEPTIONS ON THIS POINT—ROLL OF RICHARD DE SWINFIELD—PROOFS FROM LIBER ALBUS—MEDIÆVAL WARE—ITS FORMS AND VARIETIES—ORNAMENTED AND GROTESQUE POTTERY—THRIFT-BOXES, CRUCIBLES, AND WATERING-POTS—THE USE OF PEWTER AND TREEN WARE—THE RELATION OF FOOD TO POTTERY—VEGETABLES AND FRUITS—THE BANQUET—ORIENTAL PORCELAIN—ITS IMPORTATION INTO THIS COUNTRY—RESULTS OF ITS INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER II.

THE POTTERY OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

THOUGH the Saxon houses were ordinarily thatched, and it was not till the seventh century that much improvement took place either in the character of the architecture or the materials employed, yet there were many directions in which the tilewright's art was found of value. Tradition, as well as some degree of manipulative skill, may have been extant among the semi-Romanised population; and the occupation of Roman buildings by the first generation or two of Saxon settlers, as well as their familiarity with Roman remains, which at that date were considerable, led probably to a knowledge of those beautiful pavements with which the Romans had decorated their villas, houses, and possibly their public edifices. Whether these induced the Saxon tilewrights to make any attempt at imitation is unknown; but at least the glaze used in the fabrication of pitchers and other coarse ware has analogy to that used upon the Roman tilework of the latest period. The Roman floors were chiefly composed of tessera of baked clay; but there are specimens which seem to be the connecting link between the Roman mosaic, and the tiles of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In these each piece is of a single colour, but they are adjusted together, or incrusted one

upon another so as to form a polychromatic pavement in regular geometrical designs.[1]

It is unknown at what date the earliest tilework was used in connection with ecclesiastical architecture, but it seems probable that tiles were wrought for this purpose in the reign of Edward the Confessor, and that for a century prior to the Conquest there was a gradual improvement in the method of their manufacture.[2] The advent of the Norman prelates with their zealous industry and exquisite taste, as also the immense wealth devoted to the erection, or re-edification of so many churches, cathedrals, and abbeys, led to still further improvements in the body, glaze, and designs of the tiles; till, at the close of the thirteenth century, the potter's art in this direction was almost perfect in its effects, considering these relatively to the architecture to which they lent their aid. Bricks at this date were little used, and are not mentioned in contemporary documents. They were probably made in the Roman fashion, and so passed under the general name of tiles,[3] just as the generic term of tilework embraced every article manufactured by the Saxon, and later by the Norman potter.

The earliest tiles to which a positive date can be assigned are those in the Chapter House at Westminster, and at Castle Acre in Norfolk; and their use can be thus traced from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. Glazed Flemish tiles were then introduced, for in the reign of Henry VIII. paving tiles of green and yellow

[1] Mr. Way in Gentleman's Magazine, vol. xxi. (1844), p. 492. Trans. of Northampton Architectural Society, 1849.

[2] Moulded tiles in the early Norman building of St. Botolph's Church, Colchester, are still extant: and where stone was scarce, as at Colchester, we find tiles used extensively in church-building, and this apparently long anterior to the Conquest.—Note, C. R. Smith, F.S.A.

[3] Domestic Architecture in England, by J. Hudson Turner, notes, p. 27.

were imported for floors at Christchurch Oxford, and Hampton Court. In domestic architecture their utility was early known, as specimens have been found at Windsor Castle, in parts of the ancient palace at Westminster, and in the ruins of the royal palace at Clarendon near Salisbury.[1] Ornamental tiles for domestic purposes seem to have been introduced towards the close of the reign of Henry III. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they added much beauty to the domestic hall; as, when the colours were skilfully arranged, they relieved the otherwise gloomy effect of those great chambers.

But it was in relation to ecclesiastical architecture that

(Fig. 21.) TILE FROM WESTMINSTER.

tilework reached its highest state of perfection. Every religious house which possessed clay of the requisite description carried on the manufacture of tiles, and

[1] Nichols's Decorative Tiles, Introduction, p. xiv.

hence occurs so much variety of design. From these sources all the dependent churches were supplied; even when situated at a considerable distance from the parent monastery. The Benedictines, as well as the Cistercians in their solitary abbeys, bestowed much care and pains on this beautiful branch of mediæval art. The superior members of these and other religious bodies were con-

(Fig. 22.) TILE FROM MALVERN ABBEY.

stantly passing to and fro to Italy, so that, in addition to general care and superintendence, there was the guidance of a constantly improving taste. The commercial intercourse between the cities of Tuscany and the Saracenic settlements in Spain was considerable during the earlier part of the Middle Ages, and from this source may have arisen the arabesque character of some of the tile ornaments, as well as improvements in glazing and general design. All mediæval tilework shows the use of a

plumbiferous glaze, so that progress in this respect may have been simply qualitative, as the fragments of Saxon pitchers found in the vicinity of Dover by Mr. Roach Smith prove its use in this country at a much earlier date than is generally supposed.

Kilns used in the manufacture of the various descriptions of tiles have been discovered in Worcestershire,

(Fig. 23.) TILE FROM PRIOR CRUDEN'S CHAPEL.

Staffordshire, and Norfolk. In 1833 two kilns were discovered seven feet underground upon land formerly belonging to the Priory of Malvern, and they supplied the churches of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, and

Monmouth. This discovery was the more interesting, as it showed that charcoal was used in the firing of the tiles, for the kilns contained no aperture for the escape of smoke, and moreover were vitrified and glazed within from intense heat.[1] A similar kiln was discovered at Droitwich in the same county, another at Great Bedwine in Wiltshire, and one more recently in London. Ornamented tiles were also manufactured on a large scale at Great Saredon in Staffordshire, at a part adjoining Watling Street south-west of Cannock Chase. The neighbouring churches were supplied from this source; and the kilns seem to have been in active operation during the fourteenth century.[2] Gloucestershire had also its tile-kilns, and in the north of Devonshire embossed tiles were manufactured as recently as the beginning of the last century, many of which are yet to be found in the churches of the district.[3]

Had not the barbarian ignorance and mistaken zeal of the sixteenth century made wanton sacrifice of almost all the rolls and records of the monastic institutions, we should probably find that those abbeys, which lay remote from towns, manufactured not only tiles, but the common pottery necessary for daily use. From scoriæ and fragments of very old pottery found amongst the ruins of Hulton Abbey in Staffordshire, Shaw conjectures that the monks manufactured such ware as was used for their tables and kitchens;[4] and from the quantity of broken pottery found under similar circumstances at Fountain's Abbey, Yorkshire, and other of the more important monasteries, we may reasonably conclude that the potter's

[1] Journal of British Archæological Association, vol. iv. p. 216.

[2] Mr. Way in Gentleman's Mag. vol. xx. (1844) p. 494.

[3] Lord Alwyn Compton, Proceedings of the Northamptonshire Architectural Society, vol. i. p. 7.

[4] History of Staffordshire Potteries, p. 135.

labours were various in their kind. The jealousy with which each monastery guarded its artistic productions in clay, is evinced by the fact that in 1210 the abbot of Beaubec, in Normandy, was condemned to 'light penance' for three days, one of them on bread and water, for having allowed a monk to work for persons out of the Cistercian order, and upon designs inconsistent with the gravity of the religious profession.[1]

There are at least five distinct classes of ornamental tiles, all of which attest, more or less, the skill and taste of those who directed their manufacture. The inlaid tiles were those most commonly used, and were at the same time the most beautiful; but the other varieties include tiles with a sunk pattern, a pattern in relief, a pattern laid on as though painted, and tiles each one of a single colour. Of these latter, patterns were formed by geometrical arrangement. The embossed tiles, or those with the pattern in relief, are perhaps among the most ancient. They are not very commonly met with, but seem peculiar to Devonshire, Norfolk, and Lincolnshire, though early specimens have been found at St. Alban's. They are also to be observed to this day in the ruined choir of Lilleshall Abbey in Shropshire, if the dead leaves and embracing sward be slightly moved away. These latter bear some heraldic pattern, are coated with a brown glaze, and are much worn by the feet of countless generations. Another variety of relief tiles are covered with a green glaze, and both were formed by pressing the moist clay into a mould. These raised pavements are found occasionally in the churches of Ireland, and those of Scotland are often of a remarkable character. They represent in high relief lions, leopards, ornamental scrolls, and various

[1] Note in Nichols's Decorative Tiles, p. 2.

geometric and fancy patterns. Other examples of the same class have also been dug up in the ruined choir of the abbey church at Haddington. 'The relief in some of these amounts fully to the fifth of an inch, and seems ill suited for the purposes of paving; but the worn surfaces of several of the North Berwick specimens, now in the museum of the Scottish Antiquaries, leave no room to doubt that they had been trod by many feet ere they were buried in the wreck of the ruined abbey.' [1]

These tiles are generally small in size, and, as they obviously harboured dirt, were probably never very popular, especially when tiles of a higher decorative effect could be procured, and at a less cost. The point most remarkable is that they show that even prior to the Renaissance, the potter had recourse to relief-work in the decoration of his ware. In the class of domestic pottery it was a favourite method of producing artistic effect, and led by gradations, as we shall see, to those wonderful productions in which Wedgwood rivalled the cameo-work of antiquity, as well as the gem-like figures luted to the highest order of Arretine ware.

Sunk patterns formed another species of decoration; and in this case, as in the relief tiles, the colour is ordinarily red, the surface being coated with an opaque glaze generally of a greenish colour; but occasionally of a dark purplish black, similar to the dark glaze now used in pottery. Tiles of this class are common in St. Patrick's Cathedral in Ireland, in the Lady's Chapel at Winchester, and others have been found in the ruins of Whitland Abbey in Caermarthenshire. One of these latter specimens is about six inches square; in the centre is an *Agnus Dei*, and in the margin four shields. In England, these tiles

[1] Wilson's Prehistoric Annals of Scotland, p. 652.

are mostly confined to the midland and eastern counties. Here the patterns are chiefly roses and geometrical outlines. An elaborate pavement of this kind still remains in Prior Cruden's Chapel, Ely. Another series of about the same date, but of different designs, are to be seen in Shropshire and Cheshire. Some of the examples in the Abbey of Shrewsbury are of great beauty. Here the pattern is simply indented in brown clay, and then glazed. One design, of a vine leaf and grapes, is remarkably elegant in form and good in execution.[1] The more usual patterns are geometrical, formed of circles and straight outlines, and occasionally Gothic pinnacles.

The variety of which the pattern is formed by painting with a white clay on a plain tile, and then glazing, are of extreme rarity. Specimens have been found in Essex and at Malvern. They also exist in the mayor's chapel at Bristol, but they are probably of Spanish fabrication, and were imported. 'The earliest English specimen of this kind of polychromatic decoration known to me to exist,' says Mr. Way, 'seems to have been made for the mansion erected at Gorhambury by Sir Nicholas Bacon about 1577.'[2]

Another ornamental variation was effected by casting plain-coloured tiles into various shapes, and then fitting them together. Their general arrangement is in panels, and though far from common they have been found at Fountain's Abbey and at Ely. In the latter case, the panels, which are small, are filled with geometrical patterns of several colours, which give richness of effect. One pattern represents the Fall. Another part is occupied by animals formed of many pieces, slightly indented

[1] Journal of British Archæological Association, vol. ii. p. 263.

[2] Gentleman's Magazine, 1844, part i. p. 493.

with dark lines to represent their fur; and the space between these strips is divided into long panels, filled with beautiful geometrical patterns formed of circles.[1] These tiles are stamped with rosettes, &c., and the effect is extremely beautiful. It is this class of pavements which unite, as it were, the later Roman pavements with those of the Renaissance; the general design and greater dimensions of the component parts being the chief distinction. The patterns are, in fact, principally made by the outlines of the tiles; though other lines, to complete the minute portions of the picture, or add to its ornamental features, are either incised or impressed upon them. The best period of this class of pavements dates from the beginning to the middle of the fourteenth century; the colours are various, as red, black, yellow, green, and occasionally they were stamped with ornaments, such as the rose and fleur-de-lis. Though usually worn by much treading, and reduced to the hue of common tiles, yet even in this condition a good effect is produced by the outline of the design representing that conveyed by ornamental leading in windows of plain glass.[2]

But it was as regards the design and fabrication of inlaid or encaustic tiles that the mediæval potters displayed their greatest art. The pattern was first impressed on a quarry of red clay, by a mould or block. When sufficiently dry, the interstices were filled in with white clay, usually pipe or other white clay; and when the tiles had been placed in the kiln, a thin coating of powdered lead-ore mixed with clean sand was probably dusted over their surfaces, so as to insure a vitreous glaze, which gave prominence to the work, and added to the

[1] Transactions of Northampton Architectural Society, vol. i. p. 12.
[2] Shaw's Decorative Tiles, p. 14.

richness of effect. The result of this glaze was to give the white clay a slight tinge of yellow, and to the red of the body fullness of tone. Modern experience shows us that in this department of their art the mediæval potters possessed a high degree of practical skill, both as regarded the nature of the clays and the colours they used. It was mere empirical skill, for as yet science had done nothing to aid their art; but, so far as their knowledge went, they were excellent workmen. Had the period in which they lived been less barbarous—had food been more varied, indeed we may almost say more abundant—there can be no doubt that, as fully as their means admitted, they would have anticipated by three or four centuries many improvements in domestic pottery. But surrounding circumstances were very adverse to the advance of artistic taste and mechanical skill, except in the direction of ecclesiastical architecture and its adornment. Here, considering their limited resources, and that they generally confined their decorative hues to red and a yellowish-white, the effects they produced were something marvellous, often most original, and in the highest taste. Occasionally they employed a greater range of colours, as green, black, brown, and even dark-blue. But such variations in shade, as are to be occasionally observed in the same pavements, arose probably from accident to the tiles in burning, or to metallic admixture in the body or the glaze.

The decorations of the inlaid tiles embrace every variety of subject—the beautiful trefoil foliage of the Early English period, heraldic bearings, arms, badges, cognisances of founders and houses, human heads and flowers, religious monograms and emblems. Letters too are not uncommon, which placed side by side formed mottoes,

inscriptions, and rebuses. The popularity of some of the patterns is remarkable, for identical tiles are found in Winchester, Exeter, Chichester, and Salisbury Cathedrals; and another kiln supplied churches in Middlesex, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire, and the adjoining counties.

Yet, magnificent as were the pavements in the chapter-houses of Jervaulx Abbey, and of Salisbury and West-

(Fig. 24.) TILE FROM CHERTSEY ABBEY.

minster Cathedrals, they were eclipsed by the exceeding beauty of that of the Abbey of Chertsey.[1] Though

[1] Shaw's Specimens of Tile Pavements, 1852.

nothing but fragments have reached our day, and these only recovered within the few past years from amidst the ruins of the foundations, yet they are sufficient to show the highest degree of artistic skill as regards the designs. The subjects are taken from Romances; of these some of the groups and figures are admirable, and the countenances have an amount of expression scarcely to be expected at that period. The ornamental portions are equally

(Fig. 25.) TILE FROM CHERTSEY ABBEY.

elegant and original, and, from their general identity with the stained glass of the same age, were doubtless in keeping with the glorious windows which, for so many years, intermingled their tinted light-and-shade on the richly-decorated floors of this favourite abbey of our kings.

As decorated tilework owes its introduction—or, as we

should rather say, its revival—to the same period as that which gave us our national style of architecture, so it progressed with it in beauty of colour and adaptative effects, till the bad taste of the Cinquecento school, in connection with the dogmas of Vitruvius, did as much to obliterate true art in this country as they had already done in Italy. For the accessories of the Pointed arch were no accompaniments of its introduction. Its light clustered pillars, its foliations, its exquisite tracery, were architectural advances made gradually through a considerable period; and the minor details partook of the same improvement. Hence, if the tilework of the close of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries was almost perfect, considered relatively to the effects sought, so also was the architecture of which it was an adjunct. The introduction of the Pointed style, at the close of the eleventh century, was simultaneous amongst European nations, and was probably one amongst other artistic results of the First Crusade; though in our own country it took root with unusual vigour, and reached a higher state of perfection than elsewhere. The Normans, nationally considered, were rather indebted to us, than we to them, for improvements in this style; for after the connection of their country with our own had ceased, its practice there fell into disuse; whilst the English, advancing on the splendour of their interiors and the excellence and adaptability of the ornamental portion, adopted their latest manner, the Corinthian order of Pointed architecture, and produced buildings, such as Henry VII.'s Chapel at Westminster, which nothing Continental and of the same period can rival. Indeed, throughout the whole era of the Pointed style, our adaptations and improvements were truly original: and though at first the Norman

prelates exercised considerable directive power, and much is probably due to the various bodies of Freemasons who wandered from country to country as builders of religious edifices, yet, as the nation became more and more English by the blending of race, so also our national architecture seems to have reached its highest development. Its decorative tilework, like the masonry, excelled that of Continental States, and much of that superiority arose from the skill of the common workers in stone and clay.

It is singular to observe that the decorative tilework, both as to design, and more particularly as to colour, betrays relationship with the Saracenic origin of the Pointed arch. Like the Italian wares of the Renaissance, it embodies strongly contrasted effects and gaudy colouring, as though, in the preliminary stages of all sections of art, there exists the same tendency to abrupt transitions both as to colour and as to form.

Inlaid tiles were used occasionally to mark the site of graves, and they were used in Worcestershire for this purpose till far into the seventeenth century. Red tiles, inlaid with black clay for mortuary purposes, are found in Devonshire, Somersetshire, and Surrey; and we shall see in the succeeding chapter how much fictile letters and numerals were made use of in Staffordshire for inscriptions on graves and for insertion in the walls of houses.

Whilst this was the state of the potter's art with ourselves, and our chief advances were connected with the improvement of the common leaded tile to that rich in decorative effects, Italy was recurring to one of her great artistic staples—long negative, but never perhaps wholly lost. Roscoe, whose knowledge was so intuitive and

profound on subjects of the kind, was of opinion that there is no absolute death of art; but that some thread, though so slight as to be often difficult to trace, connects all great artistic periods with the days of recurrence and revival.[1] This was the case in our own country. For mediæval tilework was but an offshoot, in another age and under other social conditions, of the Roman tesseræ;[2] and we know, with almost certainty, that the fabrication of pottery had never wholly ceased on those great ceramic sites of Siena and Arezzo, which had supplied the Roman world with such matchless imitations of the classic ware of Samos and other of the Greek isles.

Spain also, like Italy, had been famous, during its Roman period, for the manufacture of red lustrous ware; and on the traditions of this art in the ninth century had been engrafted all the beauty, grace, and originality of Arabian decoration. In the succeeding century the Saracens had added Sicily and Apulia to their conquests; and from these sources, and from their intercourse with the Byzantine Greeks, the Italians must have become early acquainted with painted Moorish pottery, and with ware decorated with vitreous colours. At the capture of Majorca by the Pisans, early in the twelfth century, a vast amount of Moorish pottery found its way into the southern states of Northern Italy, and precisely in that mountainous range of country where the Roman ceramists had achieved the masterpieces of their art. Here it was admired, and so highly valued as to lead to certain

[1] Roscoe's Life, vol. i. pp. 460–1.

[2] A curious fact bearing on this assertion is mentioned in Thoresby's Diary. In 1703 he saw at Aldborough, the ancient Isurium Brigantum, different sorts of bricks or pavements, rather more than three inches square, exactly like those he had had from Kirkstall Abbey, save that these were a quarter of an inch thicker, and had a hollow in the lower side to fit more tightly in the cement or plaster in which they were laid.—Vol. i. p. 432.

portions of it, which were called 'bacini' or plates, being used in the decoration of churches and palaces; and there can be no doubt that rude imitations were early attempted. These first consisted in overlaying the pottery with an opaque-coloured coating or glaze, and next in covering the red clay body with a thin coating of white earth which served as the groundwork for coloured patterns. The ware was slightly baked, then covered with lead glaze, and after this received its final firing. 'This overlaying of an opaque white substance,' says Marryat, 'formed quite a new process, and may be considered as the starting-point of majolica. The colours employed were yellow, green, blue, and black. The lead glaze being soft, and liable to be affected by external influences, imparted to the ware the metallic lustre by which the "mezza majolica" is characterised.'[1]

But the greatest improvement since the days of the Roman lustrous-ware potters was made by Luca della Robbia of Pesaro, who about 1430, after many experiments, substituted for the original coating of white clay, a thin opaque glaze, composed of sand and tin, with a small quantity of antimony and other metallic substances. This was a primary step towards the production of a compact and durable fayence. Although most of Luca della Robbia's processes seem to have been known to the Arabs as early as the ninth century, his experiments and improvements brought them to a high degree of perfection; and being, moreover, an admirable artist and modeller, both colour and decorative effects were included. Hitherto the designs on the Italian ware had consisted of arabesque

[1] History of Pottery and Porcelain, p. 15.

patterns of yellow and green upon a blue ground; but Luca della Robbia effected a wider range both in object and colour. His works in enamelled terra-cotta included altarpieces, friezes, bas-reliefs, and medallions; and he varied his colouring with green, maroon, and yellow, though, like Wedgwood, generally preferring a bas-relief of white on a blue ground.

Luca della Robbia, as well as his contemporaries and successors, was generously encouraged in his artistic labours by the princes of the House of Sforza and the Dukes of Urbino; and potteries were established in other towns of the duchy. The white stanniferous enamel was generally adopted, though for a time kept secret by Luca della Robbia's family; and in 1500 a still further improvement was effected in it by the addition of oxide of lead to a larger proportion of the oxide of tin into which the ware was dipped. Decoration and colouring were also improved, and painters of eminence were employed to furnish designs.

The period in which these Italian wares reached their highest point of excellence was from 1540 to 1568. This was in a measure due to the patronage of Duke Guidobaldo II., who furnished the artists with prints and copies from the paintings of Raffaelle, Giulio Romano, Parmegiano, and other great masters, and also paid for original designs. Vases and services of this ware were sent as presents to various courts and princes, and were more highly prized than they would have been if wrought in gold;—particularly those which were decorated with classical subjects, and which thus ministered to the growing passion for the antique, though not in its highest or severest form.

The death of many of the more eminent designers and

enamellers, and that of their munificent patron, Guidobaldo II. della Rovere, in 1574, led to a rapid decay of the art. Some of its best artists migrated to other countries; to meet the demands of commerce, cheapness of decoration was substituted for excellence; the art became a trade, and a marked inferiority in design, fabric, and colour was the result. Nor were these the only causes of decline. The introduction into Europe of Oriental porcelain, in the sixteenth century, led gradually to great changes in ceramic art. The natural preference for a light hard durable body, combined with the purity of a vitreous glaze, and a more toned and chastened style of colouring, was at once effective in limiting the production of fayence, in Italy as elsewhere. Town after town gave up the manufacture, till at length this art—great when considered in relation to the barbarism of its three centuries of existence, and which had excited alike the enthusiasm of the greatest artists, and the admiration of popes, dukes, and kings—ceased wholly towards the close of the last century, in the same town of Pesaro in which its earliest, as also some of its highest triumphs, had been achieved. Yet Italy's rejuvenescence will include undoubtedly her ceramic arts; and from those same sites on which were fabricated the Etruscan vase, the Arretine bowl with its matchless luted figures, and the majolica-plate with the colouring of Maestro Giorgio, masterpieces of fictile art may be again sent forth, which, omitting the stiffness of the classic, the uniformity of the Roman, and the abrupt contrasts of the mediæval schools, will show how eternal are the principles of true art, and how, as human culture increases, so does the perception of what constitutes its grace and truth. It is curious to remark that with her arts all but dead, and with war afflicting her, as it did sur-

rounding nations, Italy, at the close of the last century, yet served the art of which she had been so great a mistress. Flaxman and Henry Webber entered her Tuscan province by the port of Leghorn; from thence were despatched to England casts and wax-models of the masterpieces of Greek and Roman art. Through the same haven Wedgwood enriched Italy with his choicest productions in cameos, medallions, and other ornamental ware; and to the same place belonged the firm of Micali, father and son, who, as merchants and enlightened gentlemen, were Wedgwood's correspondents and friends.

Three other towns in the duchy of Urbino, as Gubbio, Urbino, and Castel Durante, vied with Pesaro in the production of majolica. The earliest ware with arabesque designs and iridescent glaze was made at Pesaro; as also, in vast quantities, large clumsy plates and dishes for table use, and a superior kind, decorated in relief, for ornamental purposes. The wares of Gubbio were celebrated for their metallic lustre, particularly for the ruby-red lustre of Giorgio Andreoli, who is said to have improved this colour rather than invented it. Urbino was renowned for its artists, amongst whom were the two Fontana; and as the taste for majolica spread, the towns of Faenza, Nocera, Forli, Imola, Spello, Florence, Caffaggiolo, Pisa, Siena, Padua, Venice, Naples, Rimini, Arezzo, Savona, Bologna, Pavia, and Turin undertook its manufacture, and most of them with some speciality of fabric, design, or colour.

The forms in majolica have an endless variety. Vases were made of every size and outline, though the latter in a majority of instances partake of the same transitional abruptness as the colouring. They fail in geometrical correctness, and the annexation of the ansæ or handles

has a coarseness not observable in the best of the antique vases, or in their often improved reproduction by Wedgwood. Vessels for apothecaries were also made in great abundance, and often with much elegance of form, as also ewers, basins, and cups. The art also included modelling on the most extensive scale, and the artists produced statuettes, groups, cisterns, desks, inkstands, *amatorii* or lovers' presents, and marriage-gifts. But it was on the 'piatti di pompa,' or plates for show on the buffets or dressoirs of the period, that the enamellers expended their highest art. The sizes of these varied from two feet to three or four inches in diameter; and their comparatively flat surfaces affording scope for elaborate compositions, it is on them we have transmitted to us some of the highest, as also some of the worst designs. Vast numbers of these plates, as well as cisterns and wine-coolers, were imported into this country during the reigns of Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth; and, as we shall see, rude attempts in imitation of majolica-plates were made in Staffordshire at a later date.

As in England and Italy, the ceramic art of France had survived, though in a decrepitude akin to death, the changes of centuries, and still clung to many of its historic sites. The country for a considerable distance around Paris had been celebrated for its potteries in Roman days; and thus we find that at Beauvais, in the twelfth century, pottery of good quality (considered in relation to the then degraded state of fictile art) was made, and so much valued as to figure in the inventories of kings and nobles. Nevers, which lay in contiguity to the ancient ceramic district of the Valley of the Allier, was likewise the scene of the introduction of majolica as a manufacture, at the close of the sixteenth century, and at a period when its

decay was rapidly taking place in Italy. This was owing to Louis Gonzaga, the then Duke of Nevers, who, being a great patron of art, invited over Italian artists, and otherwise helped to establish its manufacture. At first, both decoration and form belonged entirely to the Italian school; but as its artistic resources died out, and native workmen replaced those of Italy, a style belonging more strictly to itself arose.

But the most characteristic pottery contemporaneous with Italian majolica, during the best period, was the Palissy ware. The life-story of its most original fabricator is well known, and as an instance of all the great essentials which in man carry on the work of civilisation, it will never be forgotten. Brought up as a worker in glass, it was the sight of an enamelled cup which imparted to him the intense desire to master the secret of its brilliant glaze, as also to become a potter. The difficulties he encountered, and the fortitude and persistent hope with which he braved them, were not only extraordinary, but also characteristic of powers of the highest kind. After sixteen years of incessant labour, his experiments, both as to enamels and firing, were crowned with success, and wealth and fame rapidly followed. It seems strange that Palissy should have encountered so many difficulties, when the secret he so untiringly sought had been discovered long before by others, and was at the time in use, in a high state of perfection, in a country no more remote than Italy. The fact only proves his great poverty, and the difficulties which at that period beset intercommunication even between countries not far apart. It is said that Palissy knew nothing of earths or enamels; except from hearsay, that white enamel was the basis of all others. He had thus in the beginning to master the very rudiments of

his art; but his success was eventually so remarkable as to lead to the patronage of Francis I. and Henri II. of France, who were to him what Guidobaldo II. had been to the Italian ceramists.

Palissy's works are almost all in relief, and coloured; the reliefs being generally copies of those natural objects which were immediately around him. Like his contemporaries the Italian ceramists, his productions embraced every variety of form. The dishes to which he himself gave the title of 'pièces rustiques' are ornamented with fishes, snakes, frogs, lizards, shells, and plants, all admirably true to nature both in colour and form. These dishes were used as ornaments to the dressoirs of the period; and many of them, with several other specimens of his ware, are extant in our own day, in public and private collections. Palissy, like other great artists, had imitators, but none who approached him in quality of work or decorative effect.

The Spanish, Italian, and Palissy wares, though each kind possesses distinct characteristics in point of art, and claims attention for special excellences either of design or fabric, have much in common. Thus one basis of manufacture is common to all three, consisting of a calcareous clay body, covered with an opaque white enamel composed of sand, lead, and tin—colours being added by enamelled glazes. But the fayence of Italy approaches in some points more nearly to that of Spain, and both betray their Eastern origin; whilst that of Palissy has, in some respects, a finer body, as it contains more of flint proportionate to alumina, and its enamel is more stanniferous.[1]

This, and one or two other descriptions of pottery—including the exquisite fayence of Henri II., which is

[1] Brongniart, Traité des Arts Céramiques, tom. ii. p. 24.

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supposed to have come from La Vendée, on the old Roman ceramic site of Tours—were the most noted wares of France in the sixteenth century. If viewed in connection with the general social condition as well as taste of the period, both the French and Italian wares exhibit, in every particular, a striking advance over those they supplanted; but viewed in relation to art, as an expression of what is most perfect both in form and decoration, they are simply barbarous. Gaudy colouring, however pure its tone or perfect its brilliancy, is neither a true effect, nor a necessary constituent of beauty; whilst both in the quality of body, and in manipulative results, the wares of the Renaissance, as those of the period prior to it, are greatly inferior to those of modern date. In this country, as also in France, it has been a sort of fashion of late years to spare neither expense nor labour in imitating these wares of the Renaissance. Many of the results surpass the originals; and there can be no doubt that experimental efforts of this kind have contingent as well as ultimate effects of value, so far as processes in glaze and colouring are generally concerned: but in relation to artistic advance, whether it be national or individual, more is lost than gained by servilely copying the arts of a classic age, much less one semibarbarous. Viewed as the varying expression of a certain class of primary truths, each phase of art bears relationship to the spirit of its own age, and to no other; whilst all attempts to revive it in precise form are an impossibility, for the reason that we cannot reconstruct the physical, moral, and social conditions of which it was at once the effect and the expression. In this sense, therefore, all revivals and imitations in connection with art are untruths. They fetter genius just as much as they corrupt taste, and

lead the mind from the sources of originality. Thus it is that, with so much artistic idiosyncrasy of their own, the nations of modern Europe can well afford to leave the styles of the Renaissance for those which spring from the culture and are called for by the genius of their age.

Prior to, as throughout the period thus referred to, and whilst Italy and, at a later date, France and the Low Countries were producing those objects of gaudy colouring and great size which were to adorn the dressoirs and buffets of our nobility and gentry during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, England, there is every reason to think, manufactured in abundance such vessels of common pottery as the simplicity of the times rendered necessary for household use. The assertion that this was not the case is wholly incorrect. Writers were few in those days, and the corporation-scribe or monastic penman had in his own opinion, though not in fact, far more important things to set down than such as related to the sale of earthen platters at the market-cross, the shape of the mugs and cruses used in the buttery, or the quality of the dishes and porringers in the monastery kitchen. Mr. Hudson Turner has remarked that 'earthenware, although certainly made in the thirteenth century in the form of pitchers and jugs, does not seem to have been applied to the fabrication of plates and dishes. Probably the earliest instance of the use of the latter may be ascribed to the reign of Edward I., when certain dishes and plates of earthenware were purchased from the cargo of a great ship which came from Spain.'[1] But, from a rare and valuable document published since his death, it is seen that this opinion was quite incorrect, even without reference to other

[1] Domestic Architecture in England, p. 102.

negative facts. The Roll of Richard de Swinfield, who was Bishop of Hereford in the same reign, proves that in A.D. 1289 cups, dishes, plates, and saucers were to be bought in the various market-towns of his diocese. On one occasion 100 plates and as many dishes were bought for 2*s.* 1*d.* in the market of Worcester for the Paschal entertainment; and prior to the Christmas feast of the same year, 300 dishes, 150 plates, and 200 saucers or lesser plates were bought at a cost of 8*s.* 9*d.*[1] We have also seen that dishes were amongst the articles of earthenware found on the site of a Norman pottery near Derby, the date of which must have been earlier than the reign of Henry III.

This proves that at the close of the thirteenth century, and prior to it, this country, so far from being dependent on foreign sources for the supply of its ordinary earthenware, had an abundance of its own, though its forms may have been rude, and its body friable and pervious. The domestic and social customs of the time, the barbarous style of cookery, the limited variety in the articles used for food, and above all the difficulties of transport, except on the lines of those four or five great roads which the Romans had constructed, and time had not destroyed, were, in fact, the real causes of earthenware being but little used during the Middle Ages, and not the generally received notion that the art of fabricating the more ordinary kinds of pottery was either lost or little used amongst us. Those who could achieve such masterpieces in their art as did the tilewrights of the thirteenth century, and who in this direction displayed eminent practical knowledge as to glaze, firing, and the adaptability of one clay body to another, must certainly have

[1] Camden Society's Publications —Roll of Household Expenses of Richard de Swinfield (edited by Rev. J. Webb), pp. 70–98.

been capable of achieving much in other directions had the necessities or tastes of their age lain that way. Mr. Mayer, and many others equally well informed on the subject of English pottery, consider that it was extensively manufactured in the counties of Staffordshire and Shropshire from a most remote date. The corporation records of many of the older towns refer to a considerable traffic in ordinary earthenware. One of the enactments in Liber Albus was to the effect 'that a cart which brings earthen pots into the city (of London) shall pay a toll of one halfpenny, of whatever franchise the owner may be.'[1] Earthenware and potters' clay were also at this early date (viz. 1271) articles of both import and export; as for 'every last of clay and potters' earth imported and exported by a stranger, a Customs' duty of threepence was paid at Billingsgate,' whilst 'for pottery imported, that is to say tureens, pipkins, patens (bowls), earthen pots, and for other small articles imported or exported beyond sea, not above written, the bailiff shall take nothing.'[2] Another entry in the same record proves the habitual use of a plumbiferous glaze; as it is enacted that tiles, under which head bricks were included, should be 'well leaded;' meaning thereby that their surface should be sufficiently glazed for the purpose of floors, steps, and probably pavements. It was also enacted that upon fair-days earthenware should be only exposed for sale upon Cornhill,[3] thus showing that on other days it was set forth on various parts of the city pavements, and that the fairs were then held in the open streets.

Cups and pitchers were the most common articles in

[1] Liber Albus, Riley's translation, p 204.
[2] Ibid. p. 209. [3] Ibid. p. 228.

earthenware. Towards the close of the thirteenth century, the executors of Queen Eleanor, wife of Edward I., paid for 300 of the former to 'Juliana the potter,' who was probably a hawker of earthenware; and we find in the Calendars of the Exchequer that early in the next century, viz. in 1324, Edward II. possessed a 'cruskyn' or jug of white earth, which was undoubtedly oriental porcelain, as it is mentioned in connection with two cups formed severally of an ostrich egg and a cocoa-nut shell. Other of the cruses garnished with silver and mentioned in wills and inventories, were occasionally of foreign manufacture, as the importation of Flemish stoneware into this country began at a very early date. In the reign of Henry IV., duty was paid for it in the port of Hull,[1] and the trade was still more considerable with the ports of London and Great Yarmouth. In return we exported lime, marl, and potters' clay; and whilst the Dutch, as afterwards the Germans, were fully aware of the value of this class of exports, we showed our habitual distrust of foreigners by various squabbles and enactments, in relation to potters' materials more especially.

To its peculiar use, rather than to its greater superabundance, or to especial care, we owe the preservation of a considerable quantity of mediæval earthenware of the pitcher form. That dug up in London, York, Lincoln, and other towns, has been generally from the site of ancient cellars, kitchens, covered-up drains, disturbed wells, and ancient watercourses. In country places it has been mostly found in pools and moats;[2] whilst of such articles as pipkins and bowls scarcely anything but useless fragments has come down to our day. Glazed pipkins

[1] Archæological Journal, vol. iv. p. 81.

[2] Bateman's Catalogue of Antiquities, with MS. additions, p. 298.

or porringers, some form of crock or stean, patens or basins, and a rude sort of baking-dish of a square form, slightly concave, were all articles in extensive use. This style of dish was usually ornamented with a rude scroll-work, formed by trailing another coloured slip on the body, and it seems to have been customary for these articles to descend as heirlooms through several generations.[1] The abundant fragments of domestic pottery found on excavating the sites of mediæval buildings, betray its general use; though its ordinary friability of body and clumsiness of form had insured no long existence. This want of durability, both from imperfect firing and glazing, made earthenware a comparatively expensive article; and, whilst limiting its production and sale, led necessarily to the preference of the treen bowl, platter, and iron pot, which in the majority of cases were far more easy to procure. From researches made on monastic sites, a good deal of knowledge has been gathered in relation to mediæval earthenware. Its *débris* amidst the foundations of Fountain's Abbey, Yorkshire, was something curious. It ranged in variety from articles which had come from the abbot's table, to the large coarse brown jugs broken in the kitchen. Portions of brown earthenware cups were found, as also part of a large glazed jar, with an orifice for a tap;[2] whilst in another heap were the remnants of brown wide-mouthed jugs, that might have been considered of modern fabrication; and two small pieces of blue and white Delft, one, in the shape of a ring, having formed the handle of a cup.[3]

[1] A curious instance is given by Mr. Bateman in his Catalogue of Antiquities.

[2] Shaw mentions vessels of this kind as being made in the pottery districts in the sixteenth century. History of Staffordshire Potteries, p. 101.

[3] Reports and Papers—Architectural Societies of Northampton, York, and Lincoln, vol i. pp. 284, 285.

Whether it were of home or foreign manufacture, the brown jug or the Flemish greybeard, many of this class of pitchers seem to have been highly valued; and though it is a remarkable fact that earthenware of any description is never mentioned in wills of the more homely classes, it constantly appears during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as an article of bequeathment in those of a higher grade. Thus in the will of John Bent of Bury St. Edmunds, who died in 1463, are the following items: 'I will, that Jenette my nece have a grete erthin pot yt was my moder's . . . (and) ij stondyng cuppys of erthe, the toon keverid. . . . Item to Kateryne Drury my best gay cuppe of erthe kevvyrd,' 'a cuppe of erthe to William Sennowe. Item to Clement Drury my broune cuppe of erthe cuvyd.'[1] At a later date still, we find these articles of probably Flemish stoneware still held in high estimation. In the will, made in 1639, of Francis Pinner of Bury, gentleman, is the following: 'Item, I giue and bequeathe unto my great grandchilde Francis Goodrich my stone pott (wh^{ch} was my father's) footed and tipt and coued with silver, wth letters for my father's name graven upon the cover.'[2] Equally in the wills and inventories of residents in the more northern parts of England, earthen pots and stone pots are objects for entry and legacy; while there is reason to think that many of the saucers, pans, and basins specified were of common lead-glazed ware.

It is most interesting to notice through the period which intervened between the middle of the fifteenth and the close of the sixteenth centuries, how immensely

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[1] Wills and Inventories—Camden Society Publications, pp. 23, 41, 42.
[2] Ibid. p. 182.

the appliances, and consequently the comforts, of domestic life had increased. In the reign of Edward IV. and his two successors, we have seen that an earthen cup or jug was an object of sufficient cost or rarity to be bequeathed to a relation or friend; but from the inventories of a century later, we gather that bottles, beer-glasses, ale-pots, and jugs were then in abundance in both buttery and kitchen. In the will, made in 1570, of Bertram Anderson, merchant and alderman of Newcastle-on-Tyne, a variety of vessels of the pitcher form are specified, two of which are denominated 'pottes of London stone;' there is also 'one erthen plater gilt,' valued at two shillings, a considerable price in relation to the money of the time. In the kitchen were ten dozen drinking-glasses priced at five shillings, and amongst the items of plate are several stone pots banded and with covers of silver.[1] Catherine Lady Hedworth, whose will was made in 1568, has 'earthen mugges' in her storehouse, as also in 'my lady's chamber;' and in 1567 Sir John Conyers, knight, is notified to have many stone pots and 'cannes.' The Newcastle merchants of that period appear to have dealt in a strange variety of household goods, their shops being more like an American store than those of modern date. Thomas Liddell, a wealthy merchant of Newcastle, an inventory of whose goods was taken in 1577, sold pewter, wooden trenchers, 'flacketts' of stone and glass, besides grocery and countless other articles. His wealth was considerable, and the abundance of his household stores very great, as his linen-chest held 'twenty-eight dozen pairs of sheets, in addition to twenty-three dozen napkins.'[2]

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[1] Surtees Society Publications, Durham Wills and Inventories, pp. 336–339.
[2] Ibid. p. 415.

Indeed the amount of household linen which is specified in many of the wills of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries tells much in favour of the substance and progressive comfort of the population; and this too often in connection with a class of it, such as blacksmiths and barbers, which in our own generation would, as a general rule, have little to bequeath. The fact is that the petty tradesman and small manufacturer held a different social position from that which they hold at present, and were in all respects, with the weaver, the farmer, the woolstapler, and many others, an essential part of the middle classes of those days. We shall have stronger proof of this noticeable fact when we enter upon the history of the old race of Staffordshire potters.

Thus limited as were the ceramic productions of this country during the Middle Ages, they yet included many articles of grotesque and ornamented pottery, of which a few specimens are still in existence. Others were introduced from Germany and the Low Countries, although our English potters, those of Staffordshire more especially, had a keen eye for what was humorous, according to the coarse fashion of the time. We have already mentioned the terra-cotta moulds found at Lincoln for forming, as it would seem, the ornamental portions of the handles and spouts of pitchers, the idea being derived most probably from Roman pottery of a late date. The period of the fourteenth century is assigned to these moulds; but previously to this the Norman pottery had been enriched with foliated handles and ornaments modelled on to the surface of the vessel in a finer kind of clay; and throughout the mediæval period this class of ware seems to have been in request. Countless fragments have been dug up in London, York, and other old towns, as also more rarely

perfect vessels.[1] In the Bateman Collection is a spouted pitcher of the thirteenth century covered with green glaze and ornamented on one side with a medallion. In the collection formerly belonging to Mr. Roach Smith, but now in the British Museum, is a pitcher ornamented with dragons or lions in diamond-shaped compartments. It is covered with a yellowish glaze, the ground of the diamond being brown, the lions or other ornaments of a dull green colour. It may be conjectured to be of the thirteenth or fourteenth century.[2] Both specimens are annexed.

(Fig. 26.) PITCHER.—BATEMAN COLLECTION.

(Fig. 27.) PITCHER.—C. R. SMITH COLLECTION.

Though the specimens extant are of extreme rarity, there is reason to think that pottery formed in grotesque shapes was not only not uncommon, but highly popular from the period of the Conquest to the reign of Eliza-

[1] Bateman's Catalogue of Antiquities, p. 296; C. R. Smith's Catalogue, p. 116.

[2] Another small vessel in the same collection, found in London, but of a later date, is of a fawn-coloured pottery, with three medallions of the Virgin and infant Saviour impressed upon it.

beth. The green-glazed jug in the form of a mounted knight, found at Lewes in 1845, is a most curious specimen of the pottery of the thirteenth century, and was of probably local manufacture, as the dark greenish colour of its glaze is similar to that of the paving tiles found in the ruins of the adjacent Priory.[1] This grotesque vessel was designed to hold liquid, for the purpose, as it seems, of coarse disport at festive seasons. Other vessels of the same class caricatured the human face or figure—as a brown-glazed bottle in the form of a fool's head, in the Roach Smith Collection; or had handles in the form of an animal, as that styled the 'Bear Pot,' in the Bateman Collection.

But, in the fifteenth and the early part of the sixteenth centuries, the homely pottery of the day was made occasionally to serve still more striking purposes of caricature. Like the popular jest or ballad, it gave indirect expression to opinions which, though outwardly suppressed, were fermenting none the less powerfully amongst the mass of the people, and there is but little doubt that those in whose possession these figures were, were Wycliffites. John Bent of Bury, whose will was made in 1463, gave, as already shown, to Catherine Drury his 'best gay cuppe of erthe kevvryd,' with the added clause, or 'ellys oon of the ferys to chese of both,' and to his friend William Sennowe another of the 'ffrerys.'[2] From choice being given, the costume of the figures was probably different, and both were without doubt a burlesque upon the

[1] Archæological Journal, vol. iv. p. 79.

Another specimen of this form of drinking vessel was exhumed in London from beneath the foundation of the Old King's Arms, in Leadenhall Street, in 1846. It was of the usual green-glazed ware, and imperfect. The date of this rare fragment was certainly not later than the first half of the twelfth century, and may be safely assigned to the reign of Henry I.—Journal of the Archæological Association, vol. xiii. p. 132.

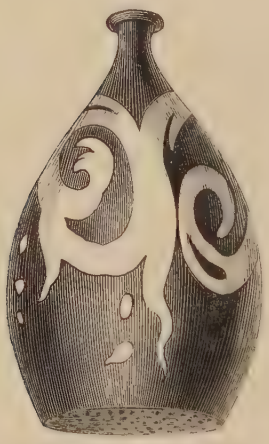
[2] Camden Society's Publications: Bury Wills and Inventories, p. 41.

difference between the doctrines of poverty and abstinence professed by the Minor Orders and their real practices. It is a curious fact connected with the Reformation, that in no places was the Wycliffite body so strong, or so bold, as in those corporate towns which were connected with the great abbeys, as was the case with Bury St. Edmunds. This probably arose from the wealth and comparative independence of the chief mass of the people, from intelligence begot by social intercourse, and from their being brought into close approximation to the evils begot by inordinate wealth, irresponsible power, and the profession of an asceticism belied by nature. Thus was fostered much of the great spirit of the Reformation of the sixteenth

(Fig. 28.) A STAFFORDSHIRE TYG.—MAYER COLLECTION.

century; as also that vulture-like rapacity for plunder, and that detestable iconoclasm, in which the most precious works of art and learning perished, as doubtless many minor things of humbler art, which would have taught to our wiser and more reverential generation, so much of interest in relation to the daily life of our forefathers.

The tyg or cup with two or more handles, was a favourite drinking vessel in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was occasionally adorned in relief with a darker clay, and had more rarely a short spout. It was in use previously to the reign of Elizabeth, and was manufactured alike in Kent, Shropshire, Staffordshire, and Yorkshire. Mr. Mayer's fine collection of English pottery includes a Staffordshire tyg bearing the date 1612, formed in brown clay, and covered with a lead glaze. Excavations on mediæval sites have been productive of fragments of far earlier specimens of the tyg, as also of candlesticks and watering-pots.[1] One of the latter, in a perfect state, and formed of dull red clay unglazed, with white ornamental streaks, is in the Roach Smith Collection.[2] The mediæval potter also manufactured at an early date, crucibles, some of which were of a form much like those in modern use, as likewise thrift-boxes, which were small; and wide bottles with imitation stoppers, and a slit on the side for the introduction of the money. The potter occasionally ventured on even the production of articles of larger size, as in the Mayer Collection is a fireplace with the date 1569. It may be an early specimen of the manufacture of Delft ware in this country.



(Fig. 29.) MEDIÆVAL WATERING-POT.

The use of pewter through so long a period undoubtedly affected the improvement and productiveness

[1] See Bateman's Catalogue, MS. additions, pp. 292–307.

[2] Catalogue of London Antiquities, p. 120.

of the potter's art. It is said to have been introduced by the Normans, and it was to be found in the monastery kitchens as early as 1386, as in that year the 'Kitchener's Roll of Tewkesbury Abbey' records the purchase of 200 garnished vessels and one deep dish.[1] It occupies a place in the wills of the next century, and later still, it forms a marriage portion amongst the least wealthy classes, as Ann Baret of Bury, whose will was made in 1504, thus devises:—*Item.* I wyll that myn executors shall geve to xx^ti^ maydens that be honest to ther maryge, tho that have neede, to yche of them xij pecys of pewtyr; that ys to sey iiij platers, iiij dyshys and iiij sawssers; and ych of them a peutyr basyn, an ewer thereto, or els a quart pott of pewtyr, or of a pottell.'[2] In 1430, King James of Scotland imported from London, for his own use, eight dozen pewter vessels, and 1,200 wooden bowls packed in four barrels; and earlier still than this, pewter plates and dishes were used at the feasts of the City companies; and pewter pots in the city taverns as a legal measure.[3]

Pewter seems to have been divided into two qualities; an inferior sort, containing much lead; the other, a harder and more purified metal, which was occasionally embossed, as well as coated with a mixture of silver and tin. A London 'garnish of vessel' of this higher quality was a coveted possession; and its makers were a rich body of tradesmen who lived principally in Cheapside and the streets leading therefrom. Bread Street was a favourite locality. In this district they carried on a great trade for several centuries; supplying the shops of rich

[1] Journal of Archæological Association, vol. xv. p. 328.

[2] Bury Wills and Inventories, p. 97.

[3] Herbert, History of Twelve Great City Companies, vol. i. p. 8, vol. ii. p. 190.

northern towns, as Newcastle, the fairs of the midland and southern counties, even furnishing articles for export; and improving on their staple, by imitating and often excelling the designs of François Briot and other foreigners. The beauty of mediæval plate is indirect proof that much of the pewter-work of the same period was excellent of its kind. A 'garnish of vessel' generally consisted of three dozen plates and dishes and one dozen saucers; every six dishes and platters varying in size. When worn out, or become obsolete in form, it was customary to exchange these services for 'garnish of the newest fashyon;' the pewterer allowing so much for the old metal. The ordinary rule was to hire these services by the year, even for wealthy households, as those of the Earl of Northumberland and Lord North; and a certain sum was paid for their use at marriage festivals, and the feasts of the great City companies. In 1557 the Stationers' Company paid two shillings 'for the hyre of 3 garnyshe of vessell;' and one shilling and ninepence for the purchase of '10 dosyn of trenchers' on the occasion of the first public dinner in their hall.[1] At the wedding of Richard Polstede, Esq., which took place in Blackfriars, in November 1567, fourteen pence is paid for four dozen trenchers; whilst two shillings and sixpence is 'Paid to Mr. Jakson of Bredstret, pewterer, for the garnyshe of pewter vessell, rough, as apereth uppon his bill, after the rate of x^{d} for the hire of every garnishe.'[2]

Holinshed assures us that pewter was commonly used at the tables of the middle classes in the reign of Elizabeth, but testimony from many other sources shows that good pewter was still considered a costly article, and

[1] Nichols's Literary Anecdotes, vol. iii. p. 561.
[2] Archæologia, vol. xxxvi. p. 50.

that treen ware, from its cheapness and accessibility, was yet greatly used in every household. The wills and inventories of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries give a curious intermixture of pewter and wooden vessels; whilst through the seventeenth century, metal, as well as Dutch and coarse Staffordshire earthenware, had in some measure superseded the use of wood, especially in towns. For Dutch earthenware was by this time an article largely imported into this country; and this, in addition to ware manufactured by Dutch potters, who had been encouraged to settle here. Still pewter held its ground, more as a fashion, probably, among the middle classes, than a necessity; and the use of treen ware still marked a great simplicity of manners. In extracts from the 'Household Book' of the Rev. John Bowle, D.D., Dean of Salisbury, 1621–1629, thirteen shillings is mentioned as being given for 'twelve dozen trenchars;'[1] and far later in the same century Pepys complains of eating off wooden trenchers, and drinking out of earthen pitchers, at a Lord Mayor's feast. At the furnishing of Preston Hospital, Shropshire, as late as 1721–5, a garnish of plain 'vessel' was provided for festive occasions, and treen ware for ordinary service; and when George III. went in state to Guildhall in June 1762 the corporation expenses included 49*l.* 3*s.* for china; 57*l.* 17*s.* for plate, and 264*l.* 3*s.* for pewter.[2] In sales of household furniture, even so late as 1773, the catalogues show a great majority of pewter for dinner service, over earthenware or china; and in the inventory of the personal estate of Thomas Wedgwood of Burslem, taken July 30, 1773, there are forty-four pewter plates valued at sevenpence-halfpenny each, and

[1] Nichols's Illustrations of Manners and Expenses, p. 305.

[2] Malcolm's Manners and Customs, vol. i. p. 347–48.

twenty-four dishes at two shillings each: no household pottery is set down, though the warehouse stock of the same date included '295 dozen of table plates; best white ware.'[1] The fact probably was that the earthenware in use was considered of no real value; whilst this occurrence of pewter, in the centre of the Potteries, and in the family of a considerable manufacturer, shows how much domestic customs are copied, and how much they have to do with the productiveness of the arts. Pewter is now become almost wholly obsolete, as an appurtenance of the table; but treen ware is still used on the tables of some few charitable foundations, and in the cottages and homesteads of remote districts. The homely wooden bowl and wooden spoon may yet be found on the farmhouse tables of Shropshire, Cheshire, and other counties, just as—Aikin tells us—Manchester manufacturers and their apprentices, a century or more ago, ate their homely breakfast of milk and porridge, out of the same dish, and with wooden spoons.[2]

In considering the quality and production of pottery during the Middle Ages, its relation to food cannot be overlooked. Vast joints of meat, or even whole animals, served without vegetables, required but a few huge dishes, a silver or pewter charger, a wooden tray, or a great clumsy slab of ill-baked earthenware. If sweets, variously commingled, were served, the pewter saucer was in abundance. There was thus, so far, little call upon the potter's art, and where the need arose the Flemish usually supplied it; or, in the sixteenth century, and for the tables of the rich, the Italian artists. Warner considers that ancient cookery chiefly consisted of 'complicated messes, such as

[1] Mayer MSS.
[2] Forty Miles round Manchester, p. 183.

hashes, soups, ragouts, and hotch-potches, all of which might be eaten more or less with a spoon' . . . 'though game, large birds, and monstrous fish were frequently served up.'[1] But even these triturated or broth-like concoctions would simply require the large-sized dish or bowl, and not many small ones, as at a later day. Vegetables were a rarity. Salads, sweet herbs, peas, beans, leeks, and one or more variety of the cabbage plant were cultivated by the monks, and in the gardens of the more enlightened portion of the nobility; but, as ordinary articles of diet, they were little used or known. Greens were salted for winter use, and as such are mentioned in the 'Household Roll of Bishop Swinfield,' in 1289. At a later date, both cabbages and onions were imported from the Netherlands through the Eastern ports, and the traffic continued till the close of the sixteenth century. But it was rather the hindrances to peaceful occupations, than popular ignorance of the common vegetable products, which made them scarce in the Middle Ages. The wars and civil feuds which occupied the nobility, and took the agricultural population from their useful labours, the lingering out of villenage, and the custom of feeding vast bodies of servile dependants in the baron's hall, were amongst the causes that hindered the progress of horticulture. It seems to have been in a comparatively flourishing condition in the reign of Edward I., but it greatly declined between those of Henry IV. and Henry VII.; and thus for full a century, the contentions in which the kingdom was involved, affected alike the smaller and larger occupations of the husbandman. With the reign of Henry VIII., or rather that of Elizabeth, we enter upon a new era of production,

[1] Antiquitates Culinariæ, Preliminary Discourse, p. liv.

in which the advance of one art stimulated many others.

Compared with vegetables, fruit seems to have been tolerably abundant in this country. The strawberry, the raspberry, the sloe, the whortleberry, the bilberry, the hazelnut, the service-berry, and the crab-apple are indigenous; and at a period when two-thirds of the surface of Britain was covered with woods, morasses, and heaths, these wild fruits must have grown profusely, and furnished no inconsiderable portion of food to a town as well as an agricultural population. To the Romans we owe the introduction of the vine, and, as Mr. Roach Smith found by excavation on the site of the Royal Exchange, the walnut: we may even be indebted to them for the peach, the chestnut, the cherry, the fig, the pear, and the mulberry; for though the monastic orders sedulously cultivated horticulture, both before and after the Conquest, they were probably more the introducers of new varieties, and improved methods of culture, than of the fruits themselves. Or if they introduced, it was possibly but a reintroduction of what had perished after the fifth century.

Thus whilst there is reason to think that all the commoner fruits were abundant during the Middle Ages, particularly in the neighbourhood of the Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries, and in certain districts of the country, as in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Over-Arley in Shropshire, which latter place from peculiarities of soil and situation was for centuries a garden of the apple, the pear, and vine, we have no evidence to prove that they were brought to table as a portion of the daily meals; though in the old 'Formes of Cury' we find that large pies or pasties made of apples were occasionally served on the high tables. But from the acces-

sion of the Tudor dynasty, and even before, we have notices of the banquet or dessert, of which fruits, jellies, and confections formed a part. The fruits were at first served on thin leaves of light-coloured wood, either of a square or round form; in the reign of Henry VIII., on dishes and plates of Italian fayence and Venetian glass; whilst the nobles of the great Elizabeth served the banquets their hospitality prepared for her in vessels of silver and glass, with which were probably intermingled, towards the close of her reign, some few specimens of Oriental porcelain. We find 'fruyt dyshes' mentioned in the will of Robert Hindmer 'parson of Sedgefielde' in 1558;[1] as also in 1570 'ffour custard plates' valued at 'iiij*s.* viij*d.*,' and an 'erthen plater gilt' valued at 'ij*s.*,' in the will of Bertram Anderson of Newcastle.[2] The four custard plates were probably the small deep plates peculiar to Italian fayence; whilst the 'erthen plater gilt' was undoubtedly Oriental porcelain, as gilding had been too recently introduced as a decorative effect upon Italian pottery, for ware so decorated to have reached this country.[3] In the inventory already mentioned of Thomas Liddell, the wealthy Newcastle merchant, taken in 1557, there is an entry of 'iij dosone banckettyn dyshes,' valued at 'xx*s.*'[4] These were probably, from their price, of polished or painted wood; but occasionally these banqueting dishes were of pewter; as three dozen were hired for use at a wedding festival in 1567, as also somewhat earlier for the feasts of the Stationers' Company, at which both gooseberries and cherries were consumed in large quantities.

[1] Durham Wills and Inventories, p. 163.

[2] Ibid. 338.

[3] This application of gold as now laid on to porcelain was introduced at Pesaro in 1569.

[4] Durham Wills and Inventories, p. 414.

The channels through which Oriental spices reached this country, at a period even earlier than that of Bede, must have occasionally offered facilities for the transmission of other Eastern products. Marseilles was as much a commercial entrepôt in the reign of Charlemagne, as in the days of Augustus, and the Venetians, Pisans, and Barbary merchants who traded thither, carried also forward a most successful Oriental trade by way of Aleppo, the Persian and Arabian Gulfs, and other routes.[1] The Venetians had likewise acquired an early and lucrative share of the commerce of Greece and Egypt, for in 1184 they were allowed to build warehouses for the Levant and Oriental trade at Constantinople, and six years later, the Hanseatic League had its beginning. From this period the facilities of trade with India were increased; the Mahometan Moors, and Arabs, being the chief Oriental merchants, who extended their traffic to the most distant parts of India.

The inferior porcelain of India may have thus, at rare intervals, reached Europe, as well as the matchless glass of Greek artificers. It may have ornamented the refectories of the princely Knights Templars and Knights Hospitallers, as well as the chamber of many a Norman dame. Of this we have no account, beyond the vague and generalised fact, that the Crusades were the means of introducing into England, as elsewhere in modern Europe, many articles of luxury and splendour. Even in this there is some exaggeration. The overland route to the East was never wholly interrupted, even by the overthrow

[1] Chinese vessels conveyed oriental goods to Siraf and Ormus in the Persian Gulf; and in the ninth century as many as four hundred Chinese ships sometimes lay together, loaded with gold, silks, precious stones, musk, porcelain, copper, alum, nutmegs, cloves, and cinnamon.—Anderson's History of Commerce, vol. p. 256.

of the Roman Empire, or by the Goths, Vandals, and other barbarous nations; and it has been forgotten that the necessities of the people, in all ages, and in all countries, have prevailed, however slowly, against the worst impediments to industry and commerce. The great benefit which arose from the Crusades, was that of enfeebling the feudal system, crushing its tyranny, and thus imparting to communities, as to individuals, a spirit of civil, maritime, and commercial progress. This long preparing advent of a new day is to be distinctly seen at the beginning of the fifteenth century. From thence we trace the long and varied line of artistic culture and advance, in their connection with the great modern element of utility; and we see that the arts and luxuries so acquired were not only acceptable, but became necessities to a continuously widening majority, who in turn have been the creators of still higher advances in those arts and luxuries themselves.

The cruse or cup of white earth, mentioned in the inventory of Edward II., 1324, the porcelain pot said to have been amongst the treasures of the queen of Charles le Bel, who died in 1370, and the vessels sent from Egypt to Lorenzo de' Medici in 1487,[1] are the only recorded instances of the existence of porcelain in Europe, prior to the sixteenth century. The Portuguese were the first to introduce it into these Western regions, in 1518, by its modern name; and it is probable that from the date of their second voyage to India by the Cape of Good Hope, in the first year of the century, porcelain vessels formed a portion of their precious cargoes. Our own maritime trade increased at this time in an extra-

[1] Macpherson, Annals of Commerce, vol. i. p. 708.

ordinary manner. From 1511, the ports of London, Southampton, Bristol, and Plymouth, enlarged their Mediterranean trade, and even Sicilian, Genoese, and Venetian galleys, and Spanish and Portuguese ships, were employed by our English merchants. Cotton, wool, Turkey carpets, and Indian spices, were amongst the articles thus imported, and we may reasonably assume that other objects of Oriental luxury occasionally formed a part. Two instances of bowls of Oriental china being given as presents are recorded prior to 1532, whilst a 'cheaste of Innodyworcke,' is mentioned in the will of Elizabeth Claxton, widow, 1569,[1] and somewhat earlier we find 'a blewe potte for flowers,' and 'a lyttle pot whyte eneyled,' amongst the closet treasures of Lady More of Losely, Surrey.[2] The first was probably Delft ware, but the enamelled vessel seems, from its description, to have been that pure white porcelain, which a few years afterwards became so great a favourite. In 1587–88 Queen Elizabeth received from the great voyager Cavendish some porcelain vessels, and about the same period her ministers, Burleigh and Cecil, presented their royal mistress with a cup and a porringer, which were both of porcelain. From this date it became gradually less rare. In 1592, it formed a considerable portion of the cargo of a Portuguese ship which was captured and brought into Dartmouth harbour by English privateers; and three years later, the Dutch entered the Indian trade and made porcelain not only a special article of import, but also of imitation in the potteries of Delft. It became also one of the minor objects of our own trade, soon after the incorporation of the East India Company; and in 1609, on

[1] Durham Wills, p. 311.
[2] Archæologia, vol. xxxvi. p. 292.

the occasion of the launch at Deptford of the first ship built by the company, King James I. partook of a banquet, at which, 'as a specimen of Eastern magnificence, all the tables were covered with articles of china ware.'[1] In 1631, when Charles I. issued a proclamation 'for restraining the excess of the private or clandestine trade carried on to or from the East Indies, by the officers and sailors belonging to the company's own ships,' 'china dishes and porcelain of all sorts' are specified amongst the articles to be imported by the company only.[2] The sale of cargoes which now regularly took place, dispersed the luxury of Oriental china in many directions. In 1612 we find 'an earthen Turkey bason,' and 'painted dishes,' amongst the goods of a tavern in Bishopsgate Street.[3] Many 'Portingall cuppes' were sold with the plate of Charles I. in 1626; and by the middle of the century it was enshrined in costly Indian cabinets, and formed the table-ware at banquets and suppers given by the nobility. The introduction of tea and coffee at about the same period, stimulated still further the use and popular admiration of this beautiful ware, and led indirectly, through the chemical experiments made in the attempts to solve the secrets of its composition, or to effect its imitation, to vast improvements in ceramic art.

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[1] Sir William Monson, quoted by Macgregor, Commercial Statistics, vol. iv. p. 304.

[2] Macgregor, Commercial Statistics, vol. iv. p. 318.

[3] Nichols's Illustrations, p. 232.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

THE ORIGINAL CONDITION OF STAFFORDSHIRE—ITS VAST EXTENT OF WOODLAND—ANCIENT CULTIVATION—GREAT ANTIQUITY OF THE POTTER'S TRADE IN ITS NORTHERN DISTRICT—THE SURNAME AND WORK OF THE TILEWRIGHTS—THE NATURAL CAPACITY OF THE SOIL FOR THE CREATION OF TWO GREAT STAPLES IN IRON AND CLAY—THE MOORLANDS—THE POTTERY COAL-FIELD—PRIMITIVE CHARACTER OF THE EARLY POT-WORKS—THEIR DESCRIPTION—SCANTY POPULATION OF THE POTTERY VILLAGES—SMALL AMOUNT OF PRODUCTION—THE 'PEDDARS' OR CRATEMEN—THE POTTERS OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES, A RUDE BUT TRULY ENGLISH RACE—FOOD—AMUSEMENTS—EARLIEST IMPROVEMENTS IN THE WARE—THE INFLUENCE OF DUTCH SPECIMENS—RUDENESS OF DECORATIVE ART—MIXTURE OF MATERIALS IN THE BODIES—MARBLED AND MOTTLED WARE—SPECIMENS FROM THE MAYER AND BATEMAN COLLECTIONS—HUGE DISHES—EXPORT OF CLAY—USE OF SODA BY THE DUTCH—KELP EXPORTED FROM THIS COUNTRY — DISCOVERY OF THE SALT GLAZE — SPECIMENS OF MORTUARY TABLETS AND OF THOSE INSERTED IN THE WALLS OF HOUSES—PLOT'S DESCRIPTION OF ORNAMENTAL PROCESSES—THE BUTTER-POT—EARLIEST BROWN AND WHITE STONE-WARE—CROUCH WARE—THE SALT-GLAZE OVENS.

CHAPTER III.

STAFFORDSHIRE AND ITS POTTERY.

DURING the Middle Ages, the county of Staffordshire still bore traces of its situation amidst the great forest district of central England. Its own forests of Needwood and Cannock, its contiguity to the great Wood Lyme of Cheshire, and to the remnants of the forest of Wyre in south-eastern Shropshire, enriched it with great picturesqueness, as well as supplied abundant fuel to the ovens of the potter, and the hearths of the iron-smelter. Situated upon the track of the more western of the two natural highways which run from south to north, and which are the result of the great range of stratified rocks—the Pennine Alps thrown up from Derbyshire to the Scottish border—it is almost certain that the varied clays of the district, now known as the Potteries, were wrought at a remote date, though probably not to the extent of the whiter clays of the Severn valley.

Roman bricks and pottery have been found in almost all parts of the county, as well as traces of the kilns in which the ware was fired.[1] But the potteries appear to

[1] The laudable curiosity of the late Mr. Wedgwood led him to the discovery of a Roman pottery at Chesterton, near Newcastle-under-Lyne, and in the neighbourhood of the present Potteries. It was formerly a Roman station and the site of the *old* Castle.

About forty years ago (namely, 1777) he caused a spot in this village to be opened to a considerable depth, and found the same appearance as

have been far more scattered than in after ages; the use of wood in the kilns permitting the potter to exercise his art wherever it best suited his purpose. The needs of the district were thus in part supplied; as excavations on Roman sites are always productive of imported ware, and such local needs must have been considerable. For Etocetum, Pennocrucium, Mediolanum, as well as other towns and military stations, seem, from the remains which have been traced, to have each contained a considerable population; and the country, generally speaking, was well cultivated. 'In most parts of this country,' says Pitt, 'are evident marks of a cultivation far more extended than anything known in modern times. Most of our commons and waste lands have on them evident marks of the plough; marl and clay pits of great size are to be found in most parts of the country where these substances abound, and evidently made for manure. I have observed on the rubbish or spoil of these pits timber trees of from one to two hundred years' growth. No history I have read, or tradition, gives any insight into the time when these exertions were made; but the traces of them are evident; and from their extent, it is equally so, that a greater strength has been employed in the cultivation of land in some distant period than is at present, or has been in the memory of the present generation; but from the present appearance of such common lands, and their sterile and unproductive state, it would seem that no attention was paid to drainage, and that very probably the land was cropped as long as it would bear it, and

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will be exhibited in our present Potteries a thousand years hence, if they should be uncovered—the foundations and other remains of ovens and workshops, with large masses of pitchers fused together by the effects of fire.—Appendix to Wedgwood's Catalogue, (edit. 1815), p. 142.

then left to nature.'[1] These marks of ancient tillage have been observed in many other parts of Britain, particularly on the downs of the southern districts. The use of marl indicated that the culture was Celtic; and the signs of exhaustion and degeneracy of the soil, may belong to the later period of Roman power, when corn had become an article of export, and the approaching collapse of Imperial rule too evident to those who held the land to care by what method its products were raised, so the wealth accruing became theirs.

But whether this culture was Celtic, Roman, or Saxon, it indicates a well-peopled country; and whether the Saxons of Mercia were or were not these husbandmen, they at least became workers in clay. The surname of Tellwright or Tilewright, which, variously spelt, fills a considerable portion of the parish register of Burslem, down to a late period in the eighteenth century, and is still common, is curious evidence of the antiquity of the tilewright's craft in this locality. It was the staple of the district. Every worker in its clays became a tilewright, whether he moulded tiles, or formed the homely pipkin or porringer, the slab-like dish, or ale-vat for the hall. Circumstances of great natural adaptability rendered it, from the earliest times, the probable site of what might become a national staple. It furnished clays suitable not only for the body and the ornamentation of such wares as were then manufactured, but also others useful in forming fire-bricks for the tilewrights' ovens, and for the construction of seggars, or the vessels in which the ware was burnt. For the seggar in its rudest form seems to have been used from a remote period. 'As a proof,' says

[1] Agricultural Survey, p. 233.

Aikin, 'of the antiquity of the manufacture in this neighbourhood, it may be proper to mention that about seventy years ago (viz. 1725), below the foundations of a building then taken down, and supposed not to be less than a hundred years old, the bottom of a potter's kiln was discovered with some of the seggars upon it, and pieces of the ware in them; and that about the same time a road which had long before been made across a field being worn down into a hollow way, the hearth of a potter's kiln was found to be cut through by this hollow part of the road; and it was not among the then existing or then remembered potteries that these old works were discovered, but at a considerable distance, in places where no tradition remained among the oldest inhabitants of the neighbouring villages that any pot-works had ever been. It may be added that pieces of ware of the rudest workmanship, and without any glaze or varnish, are frequently met with in digging foundations for new erections.'[1] This presence of unglazed ware indicates a remote period of manufacture, as even the earliest tilework extant betokens the use of a plumbiferous glaze; and it seems to have been a custom amongst various races of potters to erect their pot-works on older sites, as the Roman potters' kilns of the valley of the Allier, in Central France, covered the remains of others of a still more ancient date.[2]

Staffordshire may be said to be divided by a central plain into two hilly regions lying north and south. The southern or less elevated district has been from time immemorial celebrated for its iron ore, and for the fabrication of articles of utility in that metal; and though now defaced by mining operations on a most extensive scale, and

[1] Forty Miles round Manchester, p. 524.
[2] Ante, p. 23.

by the growth of what were once mere rural villages into large manufacturing towns and their outspreading districts, it yet retains many traces of its original picturesqueness. The middle of the county is diversified in appearance, rich in culture, and watered by the Trent and its many tributaries. This central plain is far less flat than the neighbouring plain of Cheshire, into which it enters at the north-west; for Needwood Forest is itself an elevated tract, whilst a range of still higher hills extends on this western side of the county from south to north. This district was undoubtedly at one period a continuous forest, connecting itself with those of Arden in Warwickshire, Charnwood in Leicestershire, Sherwood in Nottinghamshire, Wyre, Shirlot, and Morfe in Shropshire, and Macclesfield in Cheshire. Needwood contains some of the richest land in the county, as the luxuriance of its sylvan beauty once testified. Traces of this yet remain, for the forest was not enclosed till the beginning of the present century; and magnificent oaks, and other stately forest trees, yet adorn portions of its surface. In 1656, shortly before Plot wrote his 'Natural History of Staffordshire,' the forest covered 9,229 acres; and at the close of the last century it still contained 20,000 head of deer, and originally wild cattle roamed through its pastures. Cannock Chase formed also another section of this once vast forest land. This immense waste rises also to a considerable elevation, from which issue many streams, that flow in all directions, and eventually unite in the Trent. Till the seventeenth century the larger part of Cannock was yet covered by primeval oaks. Even now the rich picturesqueness of the district is not wholly a thing of the past, though enclosure and the underlying strata of coal are leading quickly to a vast change.

A line drawn from the old town of Uttoxeter to Newcastle-under-Lyme, would enclose the northern portion or Moorlands of Staffordshire. Here the elevation is far greater than in the south; the limestone hills of the eastern portion rising to a height of from 1,200 to 1,300 feet; those of the grit district bordering on Cheshire, to a still greater altitude. The whole of it is a wild, and for the larger part a solitary region. Where the more genial limestone prevails, the surface of the hills is covered with a short rich herbage; but the grit district is simply a sequence of wet bog or dun moor, varied by rocky surfaces, deep valleys, and watercourses.

On the lower portion of the grit district, stretches out what is called the North Staffordshire or Pottery Coal-field. Its form is triangular, the acute apex being to the north; the base towards the south; the strata resting for the greater part upon elevated ridges of limestone grit, of which the hills Mow-Cop, Cloud, and the rocks about Biddulph are the highest portion. The measures or strata by which the beds of coal are divided, consist most commonly of clays of various kinds; the grit itself, when ground, affords a valuable silex; and thus gathered into one were the chief materials used by the potter in the early stages of his art.

Geologically speaking, the site of the great modern Potteries of England had been prepared by nature for the staple it was to produce. Like the most celebrated pottery sites of antiquity, as those of Samos, Athens, and Etruria, it occupies the sloping base of a long chain of hills, where in countless previous ages of submergence and upheaval, the action of the sea had worn down the grit and limestone rocks of the immediate district into the form of clay; for though clays vary greatly in their com-

position, they are nothing more than mud derived from the attrition or wearing down of rocky surfaces.

The soil of the Pottery district is naturally cold, wet, and clayey, but its bold and diversified sweep of surface rendered it eminently picturesque in former days, when the little Pottery villages lying along a line of eight miles or more, were divided by wide strips of green moorland; when the old timbered homesteads and stone-built country halls were surrounded by breadths of fields and gardens; when the country was extensively wooded, for the oak and the fern thrive well on a coal formation; and when the little streams which made their way from the higher gritstone were unsullied and unabsorbed. To the north lay the wilder country of moor, rock, stream, and bog, diversified by remnants of the grand old Wood-Lyme of Cheshire; to the south and west stretched away a more level, comparatively well-tilled, and enclosed country, towards the towns and villages of the central country, and the wooded fruitful districts of eastern Cheshire and Shropshire.

Till far into the seventeenth century the population of this district, which covers an area of somewhat more than twelve square miles, was under 4,000. A part of these were necessarily employed in husbandry and handicrafts, in the coal mines, and in the transportation of goods and raw material; so that if we take the average of those employed in the pot-works at 1,000 we have probably a fair estimate. The pot-works themselves were sparsely scattered over this wide area. Two or three perhaps in each rural village; where they stood picturesquely amidst the thatched dwellings, small orchards and crofts, and clumps of ancient woodland—or else they stood, as more commonly they did, solitary on the green waste of

the moor, an unenclosed highway passing hard by, and their vicinity marked by shallow excavations for clay and coal, by the universal 'shord-rucks' or heaps of broken pottery, and by the dammed-up spring or runnel that supplied water for the potter's use. Where roads crossed, the spaces intersecting them were usually filled up with a cluster of these pot-works, for the two-fold purpose of publicity and room; and it has been observed that where such formerly existed, there at the present day a spacious and commodious opening of the road remains.[1] The potter's oven was ordinarily about eight feet high, and six feet wide, of a round coped form, which at an early date was surrounded by a wall of clods, as an outwork to retain the heat; but this eventually gave place to a shed, or as it is now termed a 'hovel,' formed of broken seggars roofed over with boughs and clods. Each pot-work consisted of one such hovel, with thatched and open sheds for the use of the workmen, and for drying the unbaked ware; and an open tank, or, as it was termed, a 'sun-pan' in which the diluted clay underwent the process of evaporation. These pans, or sun-kilns, were usually square, sixteen to twenty feet in extent each way, and about eighteen inches deep. In a portion partitioned off, and lined with tiles or flag-stone, so as to form a small but somewhat deeper vat, the clay from the mine, after due exposure to the weather, was 'blunged' or beaten about in water; this mixture was then poured through a sieve into the larger vat or sun-pan to the depth of three or four inches, and there left to evaporation by the sun's rays. When sufficiently dry, a fresh portion was added from the smaller vats, and so on till the clay thus prepared

[1] Shaw's History of Staffordshire Potteries, p. 98.

was from twelve to eighteen inches deep. It was then cut out, and stored away in a damp place for the potter's use. From all which can be gathered the sun-pan has a remote antiquity in the Pottery district, and Shaw enumerates no less than fifteen towns and villages in which it was employed.

The number of men attached to each pot-work appears to have been about eight, and to several of these a distinct working shed was assigned. The thrower had his, where he sat at a rude wheel, fashioning the crock, the butter-pot, and the porringer; in the next shed the stouker, or handler, performed his work, and added the handle to cup or porringer; and in a third the ware was ornamented with various coloured slips. At that early date there seems to have been little division of labour. An average workman undertook, if necessity required, the various operations of his art, and thus in all its higher branches, much, which appertained to manipulative delicacy and perfection, was lost.

There were cases, as in the wilder districts of the moorlands, where a pot-work would be carried on by the joint exertions of a man and his son, or a labourer. The one dug the necessary clay, the other fashioned and fired the ware; whilst the mother or daughter, when the goods were ready, loaded the panniered asses, and took her way to distant hamlet and town till her merchandise was sold. She then returned with shop-goods to the solitary pot-work. In this way the men would be left for weeks together to shift for themselves, catching no glimpse of human face, and with nothing for their gaze but the blue heavens and far-reaching moors. Yet rich as these were with sunsets and sunrises, and all the shifting glories of a boundless landscape, the stolid

ignorance and apathy of the workers kept them blind, like their celebrated brother-potter, Peter Bell:

> A primrose by a river's brim,
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more.

Pot-works of this kind only produced the very coarsest descriptions of ware; such as crocks, pitchers, slab-like baking dishes and porringers, all of which were partially glazed with lead ore. Their owners were a rude and lawless set; half poachers, half gipsies, who met at fairs and markets, and held occasionally drunken revels in the wilder parts of their own district, such as that of the Flash, lying midway between Leek, Congleton, and Buxton. They spoke the wildest moorland dialect; and the women when thus wandering invariably assumed a partially male costume. They led the way before their gang of sorry beasts, pipe in mouth, and stick in hand, as ready for a brawl as for an oath; and thus unsexed, pursued their calling.

The limits of the Pottery district have never greatly varied, though small villages have grown into populous towns, and the solitary pot-work of ancient days has long been the mere nucleus of manufactories on an extensive scale. From Golden Hill in the north-west of the great Pottery coal-field to Lane End in the south-east, a distance of nearly ten miles, pot-works have been scattered from a remote date. The vast change has therefore not arisen so much from alteration in a given boundary, as from the filling up of superficies contained therein. Burslem, there is no doubt, was the earliest point of settlement, from whence the potters slowly migrated to those places in the adjacent moorland, where clay, wood, and coal abounded; and they kept to a certain tract because it lay contiguous to the beaten road, which led from their own settlements into the country beyond the Wood-Lyme.

As recently as 1653 Burslem was a mere village. Its houses were few, its population scanty; so that in the register of a neighbouring church it was termed 'parochiella,' or the little parish. Hanley and Shelton were villages on a still smaller scale; and Stoke was but a small aggregate of thatched houses and two pot-works gathered round the ancient parish church. Tunstall was a lane of thatched sheds and cottages. Fenton and Lane End were equally small, and Longport was unknown, even in name, till the construction of the Trent and Mersey Canal. It then consisted of a few cottages which went by the name of Longbridge, from a foot-bridge of planks which extended a short way along a watercourse. Yet these are now chief towns lying along the same turnpike road, the spaces between filled up occasionally to the breadth of two miles with thrice the number of chapelries and hamlets, all of which are as much like the parent towns as possible.

Were the relative documents in existence, we should probably find that, for three or four centuries after the Conquest, the liberty of establishing a pot-work and digging for clay and coal on the waste was conferred by the manorial lords, the Barons Audley and their feoffees, on such as did suit and service, or supplied a certain amount of common pottery to Helegh Castle (fig. 30) and the other manorial residences. Eventually these services or payments in kind were commuted into a small rent-charge or fine; for it is observable that the right of digging for clay, coal, and ironstone was held on very easy terms even so late as the first quarter of the seventeenth century. Before that date all the Staffordshire manors of the Audley family had been divided and sold, so that, as it was commonly said 'each man had a portion;' and from this period may

be traced that slow improvement in the condition of the district, which even before the time of Plot was observable.

(Fig. 30.) HELEGH CASTLE.

Attached to such a primitive pot-work as we have described, was generally a thatched and timber dwelling; the interior usually consisting of the tile-floored house-place or kitchen, with one or two sleeping-rooms approached by open stairs, and a lean-to at the rear. Meaner hovels, formed of broken seggars and thatched with clods, were built hard by for the workmen, if they formed no portion of the potter's family. The housewife's oven stood without the house, the furze and sticks for heating it were reared beside; the midden was a conspicuous object before the door; occasionally a crop of oats or barley grew in a small enclosure near at hand, and when reaped was stacked hard by the dwelling. There were the hovel, the working

sheds, the sun-pan and the water-tank, or pool; whilst on the waste beyond grazed a cow or the potter's hardy beasts of burden; and thus, if all the more immediate environments of the primitive pot-work were not very picturesque, or suggestive of good sanitary conditions, the green distances across the undulating moorland were often very beautiful with the shifting lights of the changing day, the gleam of pool and rivulet, and the shadows of encircling woods.

In the villages or their immediate neighbourhood the pot-works were much the same. Almost every village on the track indicated had its hovels and working-sheds. At Golden Hill, about a mile from the Cheshire border, at Chell, Bradwell, and Tunstall, some of the pot-works were very ancient; and as this part of the Pottery district was extensively wooded, the situation of some of them was worthy a painter's hand. The wood of Bradwell, in some part yet existing, presented a highly picturesque feature towards Burslem and Tunstall; and it was in a place then made solitary by its shadows, that the brothers Elers erected the pot-work which their labours rendered famous. The pot-works at the south-east end of the district were equally ancient; and Longton and Lane End, even so late as towards the close of the last century, consisted of but a few scattered tenements of a very humble description, some with crofts attached to them, and with large intervening spaces of waste and common.[1]

At the period of the Reformation, the highways, with but very few exceptions, were unenclosed. The paths from Hulton Abbey to the neighbouring churches were marked out from the waste by stone posts, on which was cut a cross; a century later the roads were still in a de-

[1] Ward's Stoke-upon-Trent, p. 556.

plorable condition, and in winter-time all but impassable. This was indeed the case throughout the country, more especially in those districts of it where the constant passing to and fro of long lines of heavily laden beasts of burden broke them up after rain into the consistency of quag. Carts and waggons were unknown; and they were rare in the Potteries even in 1715.[1] Yet the traffic was considerable; and it must have grown as the woodland receded from the inhabited district, and billets and charcoal for firing the ovens had to be brought from increasing distances. The absorption of the neighbouring woods led undoubtedly to an early use of coal for this purpose, more especially as it cropped out from the surface, and also formed the strata which enclosed both marl and clay; yet we have seen that in those parts of the country where coal was not immediately at hand—as in the case of the tile-kilns of Malvern Abbey—the use of wood prevailed so late as the fifteenth century.[2]

However small, comparatively speaking, was the productiveness of these scattered hamlets, much of the ware undoubtedly found its way to the fairs and markets of even remote shires. The 'peddars,' or chapmen of the Middle Ages, were a hardy and adventurous race, who, regardless of seasons, the execrable roads and unbridged streams, pursued their calling with indomitable spirit; and who, keenly alive to gain, toiled hither and thither to the annual or monthly fairs, which then throughout the kingdom were the great centres of commercial exchange. Through a lengthened progress of this kind, changing hands as it went, the ware of Staffordshire-make reached in due course fairs as important as those of Winchester,

[1] Mayer MSS.

[2] Coal seems to have been used in the kilns of Urbino as early as the middle of the sixteenth century. See Chaffers's Marks and Monograms, p. 54.

Horncastle, Stourbridge, Chester, and Kendal, or the great commercial ports of London, Hull, and Bristol, from whence it was newly dispersed. This interchange is borne out by the discoveries which have been made in excavating the sites of manor-houses and monasteries; and an instance has been already specified when speaking of the ware dug up at Fountain's Abbey. The local potteries were at that period so few and far apart, that vessels even for the commonest culinary or festive purposes had to be gathered from a wide area, and attention would be naturally directed to that district of central England where the materials existed in such excellence and variety; where, rude as the art was, its products were most probably superior in glaze and ornamentation to those produced elsewhere in the kingdom, and where a certain amount of production naturally insured supply.

Whatever were the civil dissensions, or the wars in which the country was engaged, we trace from the fifteenth century the steady progress in well-being, and material prosperity of all who would labour. During the reigns of the two last Henries and Queen Elizabeth, this is very marked; and we find in both the town and country districts a comparatively substantial class of men, who held their own and could employ a class still lower. In the towns there were the small tradesmen and wholesale producers; in the country the farmers, smiths, millers, and others; and in a district like Staffordshire, which contained within itself the germs of two magnificent staples, the potters, iron-smelters, forgemen, and nail-makers. When the Staffordshire potters first come distinctly to view in the seventeenth century, we find the major part of them proprietors of their respective holdings, and the employers of labour. They were rude in

speech, coarse in manners; many of them without doubt were grossly ignorant, for no educational or even spiritual advantages were at hand; and they could gather nothing from intercourse with a more educated class, as they saw little of their clergy, and knew less of the neighbouring aristocracy; but a rude prosperity environed them; and a strong national feeling, as also a deep-set local attachment, made them what they really were—a free, bold, hearty race of men.

Till the close of the seventeenth century oaten bread seems to have been generally used in the Pottery district,[1] the meal being ground in the picturesque wood-built and thatched old water-mills in the valleys close at hand. But the neighbouring moorlands produced excellent mutton; the middle and eastern districts of the county, as also the neighbouring plain of Cheshire, abundance of good cheese and butter; and Staffordshire ale was even then a celebrity. All the shop goods had to be fetched from Newcastle, for as late as 1750 Burslem did not contain more than five shops, two of which belonged to butchers. In 1740 the general post letters were brought by an old woman every Sunday from Newcastle.[2] Twenty years later the post town was Stone, and delivery thence to Burslem was made three or four times a week, by a man on horseback, who always announced his important arrival and departure by sounding a horn.[3]

The amusements, as may be imagined, were of the coarsest description. Bull and bear-baiting, as well as cock-throwing, were in high favour. Almost every Pottery village had its special wake; and the celebration of this was a saturnalia of the grossest kind. During its con-

[1] Pitt's Agricultural Survey of Staffordshire, p. 201.

[2] MS. note appended to Map of Burslem, 1740.

[3] Wedgwood in Invoices, Mayer MSS.

tinuance every pot-work was closed; the public-houses were filled, and the bull or bear was tortured on the nearest open space. If the wretched animal chanced to survive its inhuman treatment, which its owner generally contrived it should, it was led round the country to fresh scenes of suffering; its progress followed by a motley rabble, which included the mountebank, the itinerant musician, the showman, and the booth-keeper.[1] Drunkenness was the besetting sin of these festivals, as it was of ordinary life. Even the sale of ware was usually effected in the public-houses. Here the masters and cratemen adjusted their bargains; and here probably, in a majority of instances, a good share of the profits on either side was squandered before buyer and seller separated. No goods were warehoused or accounts kept, with the exception perhaps of a tally. The cratemen packed their wares, as they came from the oven, into the crates which swung on either side their sorry beasts, and with these following in single file departed; leaving the potter to resume his labours through the same dull yet contented round.

Yet prior to the time of Plot, improvement had begun slowly to take place, as existing specimens plainly indicate. A plumbiferous glaze was more commonly used; the ornamentation, rude as it was, was more varied in character; and clays impregnated with metallic oxides gave a brilliancy of colouring hitherto unseen in these common wares. The germs of this advance may be reasonably traced to the excellence of mediæval tilework, and the experimental knowledge derived therefrom; but the greatest stimulus undoubtedly arose from the general

[1] To show till how recently those brutal sports survived, the Rev. John Colston, of Wilmslow, has assured us that when he first went into Cheshire, in 1825–1830, it was still customary for a bull to be led about for the purpose of baiting at wakes and fairs.

introduction of German and Dutch stoneware, Delft ware, and Oriental porcelain. The effect arising from the latter seems to have been truly astonishing during the whole of the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth centuries. It was not only eagerly sought after, as an article for ornament and use, but what was of far more account, the attempts to analyse its fabric and to find native clays which might produce a ware of similar excellence and beauty led, however indirectly, to essential improvements. The history of the majority of these is lost, and even the names of the places where they were carried on; but experiments of this nature were made at a pottery in Southwark, both during the reign of Charles I. and during the Protectorate; at York in 1665, by a gentleman of the name of Place, who expended much money in his experiments, from which resulted the production of a fine kind of stoneware. A few years later, John Dwight, or rather De Witt, a member of the famous Dutch family of that name, took out two patents, one in April 1671 and another in June 1684, the latter being but an amplification of the first, in respect to 'the mistery of transparent earthenware comonly knowne by the name of porcelaine or China, and Persian ware, as also the mistery of the stone ware vulgarly called Cologne ware.'[1] Dwight had made his first experiments in Oxfordshire, where his family had settled, and as early as 1640 had succeeded in making a few pieces of imperfect porcelain. But his success, though secured by patent, and his experiments, though continued over a long period, never went beyond this point. Having removed his pottery to Fulham, where Dutch pot-works seem already to have been established, he gave ultimately

[1] Specifications of Patents, No. 164.

his whole attention to the fabrication of earthenware, which, from specimens remaining, was in body, glaze, and colour precisely like the old grey Delft stoneware. Dwight was a well-educated man, had been secretary to three successive Bishops of Chester, and was patronised by the two last Stuart kings, as well as by William III. Of the two former he modelled busts; but the most interesting relic of this experimental potter is a beautiful half-length figure of one of his own children who died in infancy. It lies asleep upon a pillow; the hands, holding flowers, rest on the breast. The whole is well modelled in fine grey clay, in which on the rear is graved—'Lydia Dwight dyd March 3, 1672.' Dwight's experiments in relation to porcelain seem to have been somewhat famous in their day, as Aubrey in his 'Natural History of Wiltshire' wonders upon finding 'clay as blue as ultramarine, and incomparably fine without any sand,' if 'it might be proper for Mr. Dwight for his making of porcelaine.'

It is, at this distance of time, impossible to say whether or not the introduction of Italian fayence during the reigns of Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth had any direct, or even indirect, influence upon the ceramic art of the country; but there can be no doubt that Dutch pottery and Dutch imitations of majolica were powerful in their effects. The importation of Delft ware had existed from an early date; Dutch potters had begun to settle here in the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth; and from about the close of her reign till the middle of the eighteenth century, the productions of Delft ware were poured into this country, principally through our eastern ports of Hull, Harwich, and Great Yarmouth. The traffic between this latter place and Holland was immense; and almost every trading vessel

brought a portion of Dutch earthenware. It was taken in exchange; it formed, with Dutch pictures, the chief ornament of the gentry and tradesmen's houses; and vast quantities were carried inland. As many English had settled in the great cities of Holland, and no inconsiderable number of Dutch found employment in our fisheries, in the drainage and embankment of the Fens, and the general purposes of trade, this reciprocal intercourse was at one period constant and intimate; particularly from about the close of the reign of Queen Elizabeth to that of Charles II. English folk made pleasure trips to the Dutch fairs; and Dutch burgomasters and skippers thought nothing of crossing the North Sea to a christening or a wedding festival in our seabord towns and villages; and the presents on these occasions were usually of Dutch earthenware—a huge bowl, jug, or plaque, copied from Italian or Oriental specimens. The Dutch fair, held annually at Yarmouth, was a great mart for earthenware and wooden toys.[1] Young Englishmen were sent by their parents to the commercial cities of Ghent, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam, to acquire the peculiarities of foreign trade and book-keeping, or some branch of mechanical or decorative art, as printing, book-binding, glass-painting, or potting. Thoresby, the historian of Leeds, spent some months of his youth in a counting-house at Rotterdam; and Elijah Mayer, the Staffordshire potter, acquired much of his valuable practical knowledge in the potteries of Holland. These are but instances out of many; yet prior to the close of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth

[1] These facts are derived from local and family traditions. In the writer's possession is a Delft jug which was brought from Holland to Great Yarmouth for a christening present prior to 1785. It was then a hundred years old. At the close of the last century many of the middle-class houses in the same town literally overflowed with the most magnificent specimens of Oriental porcelain and Dutch earthenware.

centuries, the gaudy-coloured plaques, huge dishes, quaint mugs, and tygs of Staffordshire ware, were in many cases mere imitation of Dutch majolica; the use of barbotine, or a white dip, by which to set off the colours, proving the source of imitation.

We have seen that the trailing a different coloured slip upon the body of the ware, was one of the artistic resources of the Romano-British potter; whilst the Norman potter modelled his pitcher ornaments in a softer and finer kind of clay, though we are uncertain if variation of colour was employed. But the advance in the art of tile decoration seems to have been contemporary with that of common ware; and accordingly we find that from a very early date various coloured slips, or diluted clays, were the great source of ornament, either used as a wash or smear, or for modelling in rude relief. Pitchers and porringers of as early a date as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are thus decorated;[1] and at a later date much of this rude sort of decoration was lavished on dishes, three-handled tygs and posset-pots, from the latter of which the ale was drunk in the counties of Derby and Stafford on Christmas eve, but otherwise never used. A remarkable specimen of this description of pot is in the Bateman Collection. It is quaintly decorated with figures of birds, &c., and it is stated to have been in the possession of the family from whom it was purchased for near 400 years.[2]

Yet, till the middle of the fifteenth century, both the tile work and common pottery give evidence that as yet no recourse had been had by the Staffordshire potters to

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[1] See Chaffers's Marks and Monograms; Roach Smith's Catalogue of London Antiquities; and the admirable Catalogue of Specimens in the Museum of Practical Geology, by Trenham Reeks, Esq.

[2] Bateman's Catalogue, p. 292.

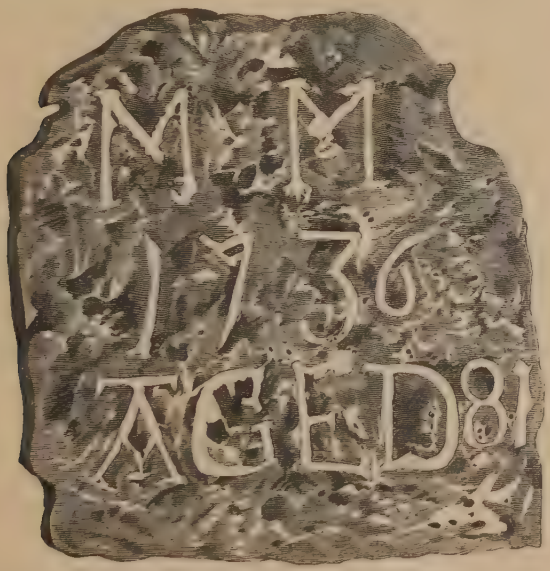
either a mixture of materials for the bodies of their ware, or to a change in their ancient processes. But subsequently to 1460 a progress is visible. It is generally considered that the use of different coloured clays for ornament suggested their mixture in the body of the

(Fig. 31.) POSSET-POT.—BATEMAN COLLECTION.

ware; but it is not improbable that accident had also some share in this improvement, as by baking together an ordinary and a fine dark clay, or an aluminous shale. Once, however, adopted as a canon of the art, it became a great source of future improvement, as want of density of body was one of the great defects of mediæval pottery. At first, this mixing process was carried on in the most rude and empirical manner, as by the quantitative addition of one to one, one to two, two to three, or three to five; and when baked a portion of the product was reserved by the workman for future reference. But eventually, these proportions were better understood, and led to the most important results.

As the art thus advanced, this mixture in the body of the ware was made to serve the purpose of ornament

also; as in the case of the marbled or mottled pottery, so common through the seventeenth and at the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. The method of mixture seems to have been this:—When the workman had laid a piece of clay upon his bench, he forcibly cast down upon it another piece of a different colour, and occasionally a third; the mass was then cut frequently through with a thin brass wire, and slapped together till the whole had a beautiful scrolled appearance. Occasionally the colours were heightened or varied by the addition of ochre, sand, and manganese; and from this body, articles of great beauty, as dishes, mugs, cups, candlesticks, and other



(Fig. 32.) MORTUARY TABLET.—MAYER COLLECTION.

articles were produced.[1] In the Bateman Collection are several dishes of this scrolled and marbled ware; and

[1] Shaw's History of Staffordshire Potteries, p. 107.

occasionally it seems to have been used in the fabrication of monumental slabs, as in the annexed example (fig. 32), bearing the date of 1736.[1]

Dishes and drinking vessels of various kinds were, as we have said, the chief objects of this early decorative art. Many of the former were perforated for suspension, and were occasionally rude imitations of Dutch majolica; as in this example, of a circular dish of white earthenware with figures of Adam and Eve in blue, heightened with yellow.[2] These dishes were in many instances very rudely formed, and stood unevenly when placed upon a

(Fig. 33.) ADAM AND EVE DISH.—BATEMAN COLLECTION.

plane surface; but as they served the purpose of ornament more than use, these defects were less obvious. Thomas Sans, and Thomas Toft of Burslem, manufactured a considerable number of these ornamental dishes during

[1] Mayer MSS. [2] Bateman Catalogue, p. 293.

the middle of the seventeenth century. One in the Museum of Practical Geology, Jermyn Street, is figured by Marryat, and the annexed example belongs to the Bateman Collection. It came from Dunham Hall in Cheshire, and has the maker's name, 'Thomas Toft,' in raised characters upon the edge, as also in the centre a

(Fig. 34.) THOMAS TOFT'S DISH.—BATEMAN COLLECTION.

half-length figure of Charles II. The same collection has a perforated dish of a still earlier date, on which in relief is a bust of Prince Henry or his brother, Charles I.; whilst another example of old Staffordshire ware, also perforated for suspension, has the two full-length figures of William III. and Mary, 1688–1702, and the name of the maker or owner, 'William Talor,' placed thereon.

The various attempts to imitate Delft ware in body and glaze, as well as in ornament, were another source of great improvement; and led, there can be little doubt, by a natural process, to the fabrication of a rude sort of

white as well as brown stone ware, from two varieties of clay, mixed respectively with fine sand from Baddeley Edge. For hitherto none but clays from the vicinity of the various pot-works had been brought into use, though the Dutch had long imported clays from this country to mix with their own; as also the barilla or potash, so largely used by them in their fabrication of white glaze. As early as 1625–1626, we find an inquiry addressed by the officers of the customs at Great Yarmouth to Sir John Suckling, Comptroller of the Household, as to whether 'a late order of the Council for the restraining the exportation of potters' and other earths included potters' earth;'[1] and about the same period, Blomefield, in a note to his 'History of Norfolk,' tells us that clay was dug from a place between Cringleford and Earlham, near Norwich, and thence exported to Holland for the potters' use. Fine red clay found in veins at Fremington in Devon,[2] was not only exported in its raw state, but manufactured at Bideford, in the neighbourhood, was sent thence by sea to different places; and it is not improbable that some failure in these supplies, or some suggestion derived from pottery thus exported, or otherwise from hearsay, that red clay of fine quality and colour was to be found in England, led the brothers Elers into Staffordshire towards the close of the seventeenth century.

Ten years prior to their settlement in this country, accident had revealed the admirable qualities of salt as a glaze. The Staffordshire potters of that day must have been perfectly aware that soda, a kindred substance, was used by the Dutch potters, not only in the preparation of their white glaze, but in that of masticot, which, com-

[1] Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, 1625–1626, p. 71.

[2] Gentleman's Magazine, vol. xxv. p. 448.

posed of sand, pearl-ashes, and soda, formed a ground-work to their glazing.[1] Soda and well levigated sand were the component parts of the fine siliceous glaze with which the Greek ceramists covered their freshly painted vases ;[2] and whether the Dutch potters had derived their knowledge from the Venetians, from glass-making or from an analysis of the glaze on ancient pottery, at least they used soda in great quantities, which under the name of kelp, was largely exported from the Isle of Thanet to Holland during the seventeenth century.[3]

These facts were doubtless known ; though indifference or a want of practical skill was the probable cause of a persistence in the use of the old lead-ore glaze under its several formulas, till 1680, when an accident of the simplest kind gave the necessary knowledge, as to common salt affording an easily applied and excellent vitreous glaze. A woman-servant, employed at the farm of Mr. Joseph Yates, residing at Stanley, near Bagnall, five miles east of Burslem, was preparing, in an earthen vessel, a salt ley for curing pork, when during her temporary absence, the liquid boiled over, and covering the outside of the pot, left there a vitreous glaze, which was easily observable when cold. Mr. Yates perceiving this, related the matter to Mr. Bagnall, a neighbouring potter, who at once availed himself of the discovery, as well as imparted it to others. In combination with a small portion of litharge, salt was soon brought into use ; and as the Salt-Wyches of Cheshire were so near at hand, neither cost nor distance offered any impediment to this great improvement.

Yet the old lead-ore glaze was still applied to many

[1] This is the old formula of mastic-cot, translated from the Dutch. See Handmaid of the Arts, vol. ii. p. 378.

[2] Birch, Ancient Pottery, vol. i. p. 241.

[3] Plot, Circular relative to an Itinerary for the English Counties.

descriptions of pottery, either in a calcined state, or simply powdered or dusted on the ware. At the time Plot wrote, the lead ore usually employed was procured within five miles of Burslem, and sold to the potters at six or seven shillings a ton;[1] but at an earlier date, when many tile-works were scattered over the midland counties, the lead ore of Staffordshire and Derbyshire, which has a peculiar value in connection with pottery, from its containing a portion of silex, was melted by wood or charcoal fires on the summit of high hills. These places were called 'hearths,' or 'boles,' and when the flames were carried high and far by the wild winds, it must have seemed as though the old days of paganism were come again, and that the altar fires were again alight, through a tract of country which the priests of the Celtæ had termed 'holy.'

For a considerable period tablets, glazed with lead ore, and bearing dates, names, and initials, were much used in the Pottery district for insertion in the walls of houses, and as gravestones. We have already given one example of the latter in mottled ware; and the subjoined specimens, from Wolstanton churchyard near Burslem, are equally curious. The first (fig. 35) is of the same material as seggar clay, or, as it is termed, marl, the letters being white in relief on a red unglazed ground.[2] The next example (fig. 36) has the letters sunk, and a dark glaze over it;[3] and these two, one of which has an earlier date (fig. 37), is of common red clay;[4] the other (fig. 38) is in glazed light brown ware,[5] and both show

[1] Natural History of Staffordshire, p. 166.

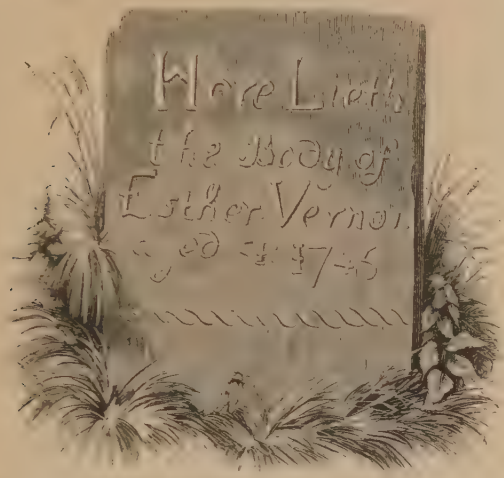
[2] The tablet is one foot high, nine inches broad, and two inches thick.—Mayer MSS.

[3] One foot square above ground.—Mayer MSS.

[4] Two feet three inches high, one foot seven inches broad, three-fourths of an inch thick.—Mayer MSS.

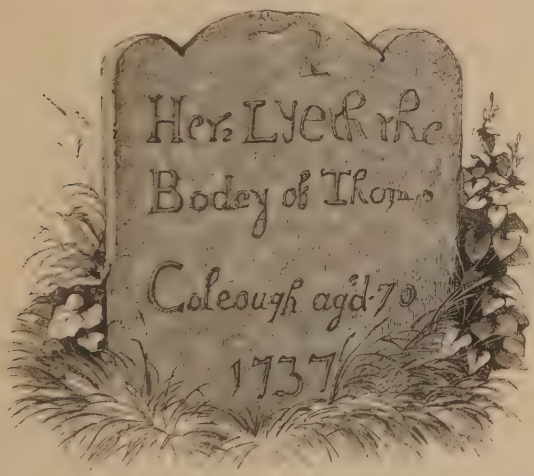
[5] The letters J. M. about four and a half inches high.—Mayer MSS.

variation in manufacture. The fifth specimen (fig. 39) is a more finished production. The letters, which are white,



(Fig. 35.) MORTUARY TABLET.—MAYER COLLECTION.

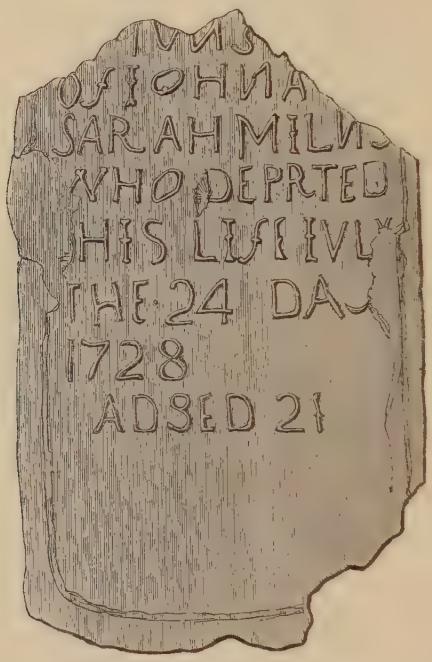
are let into the light brown glazed body, after the manner



(Fig. 36.) MORTUARY TABLET.—MAYER COLLECTION.

of the old inlaid tilework, and the form of the tablet is in better proportion than those of an earlier period.

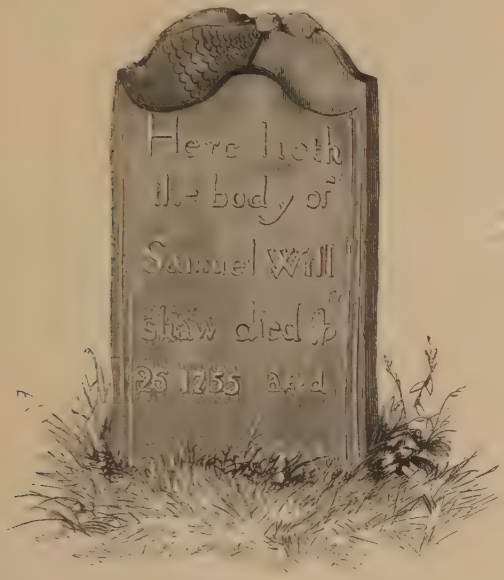
The tablets inserted in the walls of houses, in order to hand down to other generations the name of the builder



(Fig. 37.) MORTUARY TABLET.—MAYER COLLECTION.

(Fig. 38.) MORTUARY TABLET.—MAYER COLLECTION.

or the date of erection, were far more varied in colour and design than those intended for mortuary purposes.



(Fig. 39.) MORTUARY TABLET.

The custom was a very old one; as scarcely a house of the mediæval period was without some commemoration of the kind in stone, wood, or clay; and as the wealth of the country increased, and a small proprietary began to build houses for themselves, the custom was copied in tenements of a humbler character. Houses and cottages of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries are rarely without these inscriptions; and in Northern Staffordshire, as indeed elsewhere where tileries or potteries were at hand, it was natural that they should be formed in a material which every man had ready at his door.[1] The tablet which follows seems to have been

[1] Tiles of this character were used for decorating the interior of houses in the sixteenth century. They were common in Kent, and were covered

made from a clay similar to that used for the butter-pots mentioned by Plot, the edging and letters in relief, 'B. W. 1692,' being formed in yellow barbotine, or slip. It is inserted in premises yet belonging to the Wedgwood family; and, formerly a barn, is now used as a joiner's shop.[1] The initials are those of Burslem Wedgwood,

(Fig. 40.) TABLET DATED 1692 IN THE WALL OF A HOUSE FORMERLY BELONGING TO BURSLEM WEDGWOOD.

born in 1646; and whose grandfather, Gilbert Wedgwood, first settled in Burslem in 1612, and was the common ancestor of a long race of potters. Amongst the various specimens of this class of tiles extant is one dated 1689, from a cottage chimney near Dale Hall, an old thatched manor-house, where the above mentioned Gilbert Wedgwood resided after his marriage with Margaret Burslem, one of the two daughters and co-heiresses of John Burslem, its proprietor. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and subsequently, the hall was a

with scriptural subjects in relief. Some of these, for preservation, have been rebuilt in the side wall of a house at Strood.—Note by C. Roach Smith, Esq.

[1] Mayer MSS.

pleasant place, surrounded by crofts, fishponds, orchard, and garden. It was situated in a low-lying spot or valley, still called Dale Hall, on the road from Burslem to Longport, and just below the hill on which Burslem stands. Every vestige of the old place is now gone, the site being covered by the sherds and rubbish which form the foundations of a street.[1]

The tablet we next give (fig. 41) is earlier in date. It is made of light brown clay, the ornaments in relief, as dots, figures, and letters, being formed in yellow clay.

(Fig. 41.) TABLET WITH YELLOW DOTS.

The last example (fig. 42) is far more elaborate, and shows a marked advance in body, glaze, and colouring. It bears the date of 1753. The surface is covered with a bright white glaze, much resembling that on Delft ware; the coat of arms is painted in cobalt blue; and that and the edging are probably copied from a plate of the period. With the exception of the armorial

[1] Mayer MSS.; Ward's Stoke-upon-Trent, p. 188.

bearings, it is not unlike one of the early bacini inserted in the walls of Italian churches.

(Fig. 42.) TABLET DATED 1753.

Dr. Plot, in his graphic description of the Burslem potteries, mentions four descriptions of clay then in use for the bodies of different sorts of ware; and three others which, diluted to the consistency of cream, served as paint for decoration. The colours were orange, white, and red; the two latter becoming, when fired, respectively yellow and black. The vessels being formed and dried, 'they then,' he adds, 'slip or paint them with their several sorts of slip, according as they design their work, when the first slip is dry, laying on the others at their leisure; the

orange slip making the ground, and the white and red the paint; which two colours they break with a wire brush, much after the manner they do when they marble paper, and then cloud them with a pencil when they are pretty dry. After the vessels are painted, they lead them with that sort of lead ore they call "smithum," which is the smallest ore of all, beaten into dust, finely sifted, and strewed upon them, which gives them the gloss, but not the colour; all the colours being chiefly given by the variety of slips, except the motley colour, which is procured by blending the lead with manganese, by the workmen called "magnus."'[1] The wares thus decorated formed, in conjunction with those of mixed clays, all those varieties of cloudy, marbled, scrolled, and mottled pottery, so common at the period. Of the forty-three pot-works in Burslem parish in 1710–1715, about seventeen produced freckled, cloudy, mottled, as well as black ware; and the Churchyard Works, then carried on by Josiah Wedgwood's father, were solely for black and mottled pottery.[2] The document which affords this information also proves the correctness of Plot's account, in assigning to Burslem and its vicinity the chief trade in butter-pots; although, in themselves, they formed a very minor portion of the ware produced.

The butter-pot was a coarse cylindrical vessel about fourteen and a half inches high, formed of clay from the vicinity of Burslem and Bradwell Wood, and glazed before firing with a mixture of lead or 'galena,' and manganese. They were made in vast quantities, and conveyed on the cratemen's backs to every village, homestead, and solitary

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[1] Natural History of Staffordshire, p. 122.

[2] Paper in Mr. Wedgwood's own handwriting, drawn up in 1776.—Mayer MSS.

farm scattered over that large extent of country watered by the Dove and Trent, along which the meadows, resting generally upon a limestone formation, afforded rich and abundant pasturage to a vast number of cattle; although their management and the condition of agriculture, generally speaking, was at that period below mediocrity.[1] Great quantities of excellent cheese and butter were thus produced, for which the chief market was Uttoxeter. This trade seems to have existed for a considerable period; and at first the butter-pots were unglazed, small, and heavy. These defects led to much trickery, through the weight and porousness of the vessels, as also by false packing. Various attempts were probably made to rectify these abuses; and about 1640, Richard Cartwright, of Burslem, affixed his name in rude relief to such butter-pots as he manufactured, as a warranty for the genuineness of their depth and weight. These reforms were doubtless insufficient, for in 1661 an Act of Parliament was obtained for regulating the abuses of the trade. In 1676, when Plot wrote his account of the Staffordshire Potteries, the London dealers kept a factor, the summer through, at Uttoxeter, whose dealing sometimes amounted to the sum of 500*l.* on a market-day; and who guarded

(Fig. 43.) BUTTER-POT.—MUSEUM OF PRACTICAL GEOLOGY COLLECTION.

[1] Pitt's Agricultural Survey, p. 231.

against imposition by testing the butter with a borer, as in the case of cheese.

Richard Cartwright was a man of comparative wealth and standing, for he seems to have been well known in his day, and he devised 20*l.* for ever to the poor of Burslem; the interest thereof to be laid out in bread, and distributed quarterly by the churchwardens and overseers.[1] Plot terms him 'a poor butter-pot maker,' but this meant, in the loose and ungrammatical style of the period, a maker solely of mean and cheap vessels. The value of cheapness conjoined with utility had not then been recognised; and another century had to elapse, and vast improvements both in science and manufactures had to be made, before the connection between the two, so far as relates to the ordinary necessaries of life, could be judged of in its significant relation to the progress, well-being, and refinement of the population.[2] Richard Cartwright was succeeded in his business by a son, or other relative, as, amongst the Burslem potters, in 1710–1715 three pot-works solely for the manufacture of butter-pots are specified. One of these, at the west end of the town, was carried on by Thomas Cartwright; a second by — Bagnal at the Grange, and a third by H. Beech at Holdin. The value of the pots manufactured weekly is set down by Wedgwood at 2*l.* each pot-work. The trade by this time had very probably declined.

The combination of two varieties of clay with sand of fine quality had led in 1685, as already stated, to the manufacture of a rude description of brown and white

[1] Ward's Stoke-upon-Trent, p. 270.

[2] Richard Cartwright was possessor of considerable property at Milton, in the parish of Burslem, where he seems to have resided. In January, 1654, he joined John Mace and Josiah Dean of the same place in an agreement as to the sale of certain hereditaments, messuages, lands, and tenements, the money to be expended in securities of a like kind or be put out to interest.—Parchment deed, Mayer MSS.

stoneware, by two persons of the respective name of Miles, living in Shelton and Hanley. Other variations in body were attempted, and occasionally with success; the glazes being lead or salt, or in cases where the amount of sand in the bodies allowed of vitrification in firing, a glaze was omitted. Tea and coffee-pots were made of these various bodies, and the ornaments were either embossed or in relief; these latter being formed by scraping away the body or dip with a small iron instrument.

These experiments led in 1690 to the production of a still whiter and better kind of pottery, which the makers called Crouch ware. Its materials were almost the same as the coarse stonewares already mentioned; though more care was taken in its preparation and subsequent firing. It was covered with a salt glaze, to which in some cases red lead in powder was added, in the proportion of a bushel of salt to a pint of lead.[1] Ornamental as well as useful articles were made of this ware, of which the tint of the body was occasionally varied by the use of a grey-coloured clay.

By this time the salt glaze had been brought into very general use. The larger portion of the twenty-two ovens then in Burslem were used for ware so glazed, and they were adapted to the process by having scaffolds built round their mouths or fire-places, of which each oven had eight. On these scaffolds the firemen stood whilst they cast in the salt; and at a later stage of the process when the ware was fired enough, a fresh supply of salt was cast in at the top of the oven. This being more rapidly decomposed by the intense heat, produced vast clouds of smoke and vapour, which not only filled the streets and

[1] Shaw's History of Staffordshire Potteries, p. 110.

houses in the town, but spread far over the adjacent country. These 'firings up' took place together on Saturday mornings, between the hours of eight and twelve, so that though the nuisance was of no lengthened duration, yet during its continuance travellers approaching the town mistook their road, and persons in the streets ran against each other.[1]

[1] Shaw's History of Staffordshire Potteries, pp. 110-112; Mayer MSS.

CAMEO MEDALLION.—MAYER COLLECTION.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

THE RED WARE OF JAPAN—THE INTRODUCTION OF THE BROTHERS ELERS—THEIR MYSTERIOUS PROCEEDINGS AT THEIR POT-WORK AT BRADWELL — ATTEMPTS TO DIVE INTO THE SECRETS OF THEIR TRADE—THE SUCCESS OF THESE ATTEMPTS—ASTBURY'S WONDERFUL IMPERSONATION OF ENTIRE IDIOCY—EXCELLENCE OF THE MESSRS. ELERS' WARE — WEDGWOOD'S IMPROVEMENTS ON THE BLACK EGYPTIAN—ASTBURY'S INTRODUCTION OF DEVONSHIRE PIPE-CLAY—THIS SKILFUL POTTER THE REAL PRECURSOR OF WEDGWOOD—MOULDS—THOSE OF GYPSUM—MOULDED ORNAMENTS—IMPROVEMENT IN BUSINESS CUSTOMS — MORE ACTIVITY AMONGST THE MASTER-POTTERS—ASTBURY'S ADVENTURE AT BANBURY—INTRODUCTION OF FLINT — BENSON'S PATENTS — EXTRAORDINARY DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRADE — CAST WARE — FIRST CREAM-COLOURED WARE — ITS SUBSEQUENT IMPROVEMENTS—RALPH SHAW'S PATENT—PYROMETRICAL BEADS—AGATE—TORTOISESHELL AND MELON WARES—DIP WARE — LINED WARE — FLUID GLAZES—MECHANICAL AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS—THE RATIO OF ADVANCE CONSIDERED—THE GREAT MERITS OF WEDGWOOD'S PREDECESSOR — THE APTITUDE OF HIS GENIUS TO MEET THE WANTS OF HIS TIME—THE DECLINE OF EXPORTS—THE VAST IMPROVEMENT OF TRADE, BOTH INTERNAL AND FOREIGN, IN A BRIEF SPACE AFTER THE INTRODUCTION OF WEDGWOOD'S CREAM-COLOURED WARE.

CHAPTER IV.

WEDGWOOD'S PREDECESSORS, AND THEIR WORK.

TOWARDS the close of the seventeenth century some specimens of the fine red ware of Japan were imported into Europe by the East India Companies, and various Dutch and English potters attempted its imitation, but failed for the want of requisite clay. Yet this abounded in many places in England, and the Staffordshire potters had it of fine quality and rich colour in their own neighbourhood; though they had hitherto failed in turning it to more account than for ornamental purposes of the rudest kind. But now two strangers of foreign speech and reserved manners made their appearance in the neighbourhood of Burslem, and after exciting considerable curiosity as to who they were, and what their business could be in that remote district, they added still further to it by hiring an old thatched farm-house and some adjacent land in a secluded spot near Bradwell Wood. Here they erected a small pot-work, dug for clay on the land they had hired, and bought horse-loads of coal from the neighbouring pits, as was then the custom; so that it soon became known, far and wide, that these were German potters, who, willing to take advantage of the mineral wealth of the neighbourhood, were yet unwilling to share with its inhabitants any of the secrets of their art. That they

were masters of it, so far as ceramic knowledge then went, their manufactured articles prove. Some of their processes seem also to have been in advance, as, according to Shaw, their method of salt glazing was different from that of the surrounding potters.[1] They also levigated their clays more carefully, and evaporated them by some artificial process,[2] which was probably in principle the same as that followed by Ralph Shaw prior to 1732, and which under the title of the 'slip-kiln' was generally introduced about 1740.

Rumour was busy about these things, curiosity intensified; and the mistrust and jealous circumspection of the two foreigners increased the latter. They employed about their works the most stupid boys and men; they hired an idiot to turn the thrower's wheel; they locked these people into their respective departments of labour, and searched them strictly when dismissed. All outer doors were kept closed, many windows were blinded; when out-door work was done, it was as much as possible beneath the shadow of the trees, and eventually they went so far as to hire another farm-house or cottage at Dimsdale, in their neighbourhood, as a depôt for the sale of goods. Even this was situated a short distance from the main road; and thither, across the fields, they carried their finished ware by night. It is also said that an earthen pipe was laid between the two places, through which warning was given to those about the pot-work when any person approached who seemed to be an intruder.

Had the brothers Elers known anything of human nature, they would have understood that this was precisely the method to lead ultimately to a publication of

[1] Chemistry of Pottery, p. 410. [2] Ibid. p. 414.

their secrets. It was injudicious thus to act with a jealous race of men; astute if ignorant, but as kindly as children if openly dealt with. They forgot that they were themselves intruders; that they were turning to account those materials of their art which, in the ignorant spirit of monopoly then prevalent, the potters of the neighbourhood considered as their birthright; and, what was more, they were foreigners, whom it was then a part of our insolent national creed to hate. Accordingly they were annoyed and persecuted in every possible way; and methods were adopted to dive into their secrets. The first successful attempt was made by a potter of Shelton, named Twyford; who, obtaining employment at the Bradwell pot-work, gathered much relating to the processes carried on, by affecting a supreme indifference and carelessness to what he witnessed. Whether he kept what he learnt to himself, or could not dive into the whole mystery of the place, is now unknown; but a second and still more successful attempt was made by a person named Samuel Astbury, who at that period must have been a very young man. There is no doubt a good deal of exaggeration in connection with these traditions, as it was probably felt to be a local triumph to thus outwit the foreigners; but the main facts are reliable, though it is difficult to credit that Astbury could have kept up his disguise for so long a period as two years, or accounted for his daily absence from his own locality; more especially if, prior to this, he had been established in business as a potter. However this may have been, he disguised himself so effectually as to pass the recognition of his neighbour Twyford, and making his way to the secluded pot-work, assumed there the demeanour of perfect idiocy. He was patient alike under cuffs, kicks, reviling,

and general harsh treatment; he would not be driven away, but patiently waited till food was given to him, and he was set to work to assist others; and as he affected not to recollect any directions which might be given to him, or be capable of the meanest duties if left to himself, he was put to move the treadle of a lathe. His wonderful impersonation was so successful as to wholly deceive his suspicious masters, who, glad of the assistance of such an apparent nonentity, admitted him, eventually, into every department of their pot-work. Here the young man was sedulously observant, and making, on his return home each evening, notes of every process he witnessed, or manipulation in which he or others were engaged, as well as models of every implement and machine, in due time he acquired every necessary particular relating to the Messrs. Elers' manufacture. He then made a real or pretended fit of illness the ostensible cause for quitting their service;[1] or what is more probable, his disguise was penetrated, and he was dismissed. After this he began business in his own neighbourhood of Shelton, and it is said his old masters soon found in him a formidable competitor.

These facts have been variously related, but no writer has commented on the baseness of such a method of obtaining other men's honest secrets. No doubt their publicity was of considerable advantage to the potters, and led to various improvements in their trade; but the mere thought of stealing into another man's manufactory, shop, or dwelling, for ends the most selfish, and for robbing him of what was as truly his own as the money in his pocket, or the coat he wore, would be revolting to

[1] Shaw's Chemistry of Pottery, p. 410; History of Staffordshire Potteries, pp. 119, 120.

any one of ordinary principle. So far had education advanced, that sixty years later it would have been impossible for any manufacturer of standing to have acted so without loss of public credit; although, as we shall see, those who had no ideas of their own, though willing enough to steal them from others, were in all times, and in all arts, a plentiful race; and that in this way most of Wedgwood's inventions and improvements were, as far as possible, stolen as soon as made by a worthless set of petty manufacturers, who thought no craft too base so they secured some fruit of this great man's genius and enterprise. No doubt this laxity on the part of Astbury, who seems otherwise to have been a man of worth and great natural capacity, is referable to the low state of morals prevalent at the period in which he lived; as also to the rivalry of trade, and to that hatred of foreigners, whom to overreach was considered meritorious in an eminent degree. For at least twenty years the Messrs. Elers contended with these humours of their uncouth and wily neighbours. They then removed to Chelsea, near London,[1] and assisted, as it seems probable, in improving the manufacture of soft porcelain, which had been commenced there as early as 1698 by some Venetian glass-makers, whose productions were at first little better than opaque glass. Eventually Chelsea porcelain became a famous production, of which the period of greatest excellence was from 1750 to 1765. In 1769–1770 the works were purchased by Mr. Duesbury of Derby, who carried them on simultaneously with his manufactory at the latter place till 1784, when the

[1] Of one of the brothers Elers, and his son Paul Elers, the father-in-law of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, some curious particulars will subsequently appear.

Chelsea works were discontinued, the kilns and every part of them pulled down, and what could be made available sent to Derby.[1] It was probably the facility with which painters in enamel and other accustomed workmen could be procured, which in some measure induced Wedgwood and Bentley, in 1769, to hire premises in Little Cheyne Row for their enamelling business. Here was painted the famous Russian service, as well as other ornamental ware of the highest degree of excellence.

The ware manufactured by the Messrs. Elers consisted of a good imitation of the red unglazed ware of Japan, and a black ware, which was subsequently much improved by Wedgwood, and termed Egyptian. The first was made from the fine red clay of Bradwell Wood, mixed with ochreous clay from Chesterton, and hard fired; and the latter of red clay and ironstone. This last is said to have been suggested by the appearance of some parts of the red ware, which contained excess of iron, being left dark when baked. Wedgwood's Egyptian was a more complicated body, being formed of native clay, ground ironstone, ochre (procured from the oxide of iron found in the coal mines—locally called 'Car'), and oxide of manganese.[2]

Such of the ware of the Messrs. Elers as has descended to our day is remarkable for its fineness of material and sharpness of outline; the ornaments having been formed in copper moulds. It usually consists of teapots, cups and saucers, coffee-cups, and ladles, of which the colour is more generally red than black, and oftener plain than decorated; but occasionally it is ornamented with pressed

[1] Chaffers's Marks and Monograms, p. 140.

[2] Mayer MSS. Knapp gives the more modern formula.:—Red clay, 45 or 34; Dorset clay, 36 or 42; manganese, 13 or 12; protoxide of iron, 6 or 12.—Chemistry applied to Arts and Manufactures, vol. ii. p. 476.

patterns in relief, which are sometimes copies from Chinese and Japan wares. These teapots are said to have been sold from the Bradwell works at a price ranging from twelve shillings to a guinea each: a proof

(Fig. 44.) PIGGIN AND LADLE, ELERS' WARE.
MUSEUM OF PRACTICAL GEOLOGY, JERMYN STREET.

in itself that this ware was held in the highest estimation. The Museum of Practical Geology, Jermyn Street, contains some admirable specimens, of which three are here given.[1]

(Fig. 45.) TEAPOT, ELERS' WARE.—MUSEUM OF PRACTICAL GEOLOGY, JERMYN STREET.

It is not known at what period the clays of Dorset and Devon were first brought into Staffordshire, but

[1] Marryat's History of Pottery and Porcelain, p. 151. Catalogue, Museum of Practical Geology, pp. 121, 122.

probably early in the seventeenth century. Pipe-makers had established themselves in several parts of the county of Stafford, and amongst other places at Newcastle, where in addition to the manufacture on a considerable scale of hats and clothing, pipes were made from three sorts of clay obtained in the neighbourhood.[1] However carefully these were burnt, the pipes had a greyish tint, to rectify which the imported clay was used as a wash, previously to firing. This was called indifferently 'Ball clay,' or 'Chester clay,' from being made up in lumps weighing sixty or seventy pounds each; and from having, when first imported, been brought up the Dee to Chester; and thence carried inland, it was called Chester clay, which name it long retained. Eventually this route was changed. Upon the improvement of the Weaver navigation, about 1720, potters' materials were brought up the Mersey, and hence by the river Weaver to Winsford; and here the opportunity was taken of conveying it into the Potteries, by return gangs of pack-horses which had come laden thither with crates of ware. Each horse carried six balls of clay, three in a pannier on either side, and during the journey its nose was muzzled to prevent it biting the hedgerows as it passed slowly on along the narrow roads, or rather lanes, as such they were.[2]

Though his knowledge had been thus increased by means morally reprehensible, Astbury was too much a man of genius to be a mere imitator. In this respect he was the real precursor of Wedgwood. The same rapid power of analysis, suggestive fertility of means to ends, and subservience of theory to practice, were characteristics of both men. Both were eminently practical; and it is

[1] Plot, Natural History of Staffordshire, p. 123.

[2] Shaw's History of Staffordshire Potteries, p. 149.

not too much to say, that if Wedgwood advanced the artistic and scientific portions of his art to a point which as much won the admiration of the highest culture of his time, as it proved practically beneficial to society in a general sense, Astbury prepared the way by discoveries, or rather new adaptations, of its elementary principles. He was modest in the extreme, making no boast of what he did or knew; and from the little which has been handed down to our day in relation to him, he seems to have been prevented from bringing forward many improvements in his art, rather by the opposition he knew he should encounter from the prejudices of those around him, than from want of zeal or fertile suggestiveness. He, therefore, did not rise above the ordinary level of his time; lacking as he thus did one of the highest characteristics of true genius—the moral courage to assert principles, to strive for effects, or to carry forward truths, with indifference to all things but results.

His little pot-work was situated amidst the thatched cottages of Shelton, not far from that of his friend Twyford; and here Astbury soon proved that he was no mere imitator, but could carry forward the knowledge he had acquired from his foreign masters. Hitherto it had been the custom to glaze the inside of culinary vessels with lead ore, and subsequently with salt glaze, but the effect of both was to give a grey or smoky tinge. Recollecting the results obtained by the Newcastle pipe-makers from their use of Devonshire clay, he tried it as a wash upon the inner surfaces of his vessels; and this with such admirable effect as to excite him to further trial. He levigated the imported clay with the utmost care, and mixing it with a clay, known as Shelton marl, from his own neighbourhood, he ultimately produced, as

practice brought him knowledge, a white ware which for body and colour was superior to any yet seen in the Potteries. It was an advance upon that hitherto known as Crouch ware, and led to the general use of the whiter clays of the south-western counties.[1]

Other manufacturers were also busy with improvements. They adopted Astbury's wash of pipe-clay; made experiments in the various clays brought from the coal stratas; and tried their hand in painting rude landscapes in cobalt blue. Ordinary pipe-clay was substituted for marl in the fabrication of white stoneware, and with the best effect; moulds were brought into use, and seem at first to have been of metal, into which the clay was pressed. It is said discarded forms were obtained from the London silversmiths, and the superior kinds of white ware manufactured in the reign of Queen Anne clearly indicate their use.[2] In no great time moulds of this kind gave place to those formed of gypsum or plaster of Paris. At first these were cut out from the solid block, and involved a laborious process, when the ornamentation desired was of a complicated character; but about 1743 Mr. Ralph Daniel, a manufacturer residing at Colridge, ascertained, during a visit to France, that the moulds, used in the porcelain works there, were formed by mixing calcined gypsum, reduced to powder, with water, pouring the composition on the types or models, and then leaving it to dry. This was an easy method, insured great accuracy of detail, and proved to be one of those secondary causes which

[1] Shaw's account of this matter is, as usual, very confused. The ordinary interpretation of the passage is retained. Though if Astbury discarded the native clays altogether, and made an improved Crouch ware, the mixture must have been the siliceous grit of Mole Cop with Devonshire pipe-clay rather than Shelton marl.

[2] Some of the earliest specimens of Worcester china have been formed in moulds used by silversmiths. See Descriptive Catalogue of Museum formed at Worcester, p. 124.

lend so much aid to the advancement of an art.[1] The early history of gypsum, in its use as moulds for pottery, is involved in entire obscurity. The first idea was probably derived from some analogous use in architecture; as the heavily ornamented ceilings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and prior to that the grained and traced works of the ecclesiastical edifices, indicate clearly that the processes of moulding were well known.

The black ware already referred to was soon a common production in the shape of jugs and teapots; the latter sometimes set upon feet made to resemble those of a mole. At first these articles were covered with lead glaze, and ornamented with other coloured clays in the form of rudely shaped leaves and fruit; but mutation was even here, for this ware shared in the general improvement. Astbury's wash of Bideford pipe-clay was used for its interior surfaces; its ornaments were formed separately in relief; and it was salt-glazed. The moulds in which the ornaments of this, and other descriptions of superior ware, were now formed, were of brass or tough clay; many of the manufacturers incurring considerable expense in their preparation, particularly as related to those of brass, which were made similar to the tools used by bookbinders. Into either of these descriptions of moulds the prepared clay was pressed; the surface and edges were then well smoothed, and when extracted, they were fixed to the sides of the vessels with slip. These moulded ornaments were usually black or white, and thus contrasted with the opposing colour to which they were luted; at other times they were coloured blue by dusting them with pul-

[1] Ralph Daniel, it is said, effected his entrance into one of the porcelain manufactories by some surreptitious method. Here he obtained a specimen of the moulds in use, and also learnt the method of its manufacture.

verised zaffre ; and where the ornament formed a medallion of some eminent personage, as Queen Anne, George I., or the Duke of Marlborough, it was made of native yellow clay.[1] The makers of these moulds were at first called 'block cutters,' probably from their labours in connection with blocks of gypsum in its native state ; but as soon as they had mastered the easier and more artistic method, they became known as modellers and mould makers, and as such took one of the highest departments in the potter's art. There can be no doubt that these first attempts to improve the method and style of figures and medallions, in relief, gave rise to the more elaborate processes connected with the successful imitation of the cameos, bas-reliefs, and gems of antique art. Wedgwood's first attempts in this direction were mere medallions in a cane-colour or pasty-white body ; and as such might have served for ornamenting ordinary ware. But the advance was marvellous. The contrast between these and the cameos of 1775–1785, when he had brought his jasper bodies to perfection, and adorned them with reliefs modelled by the first artists from the rarest works of antiquity, is as marked as that between a common earthenware vessel, and some one of the masterpieces of Worcester porcelain which appeared in the International Exhibition of 1862.

The first twenty years of the eighteenth century had now elapsed ; and the improvements in their staple, and the general increase of trade, showed plainly that the Staffordshire potters had not been idle. There was in fact activity everywhere. The commencement of a great industrial era was already to be observed ; and the pro-

[1] Catalogue, Enoch Wood's Collection ; Shaw's History of Staffordshire Potteries, p. 150.

duction of pottery, like that of other useful and necessary articles, was stimulated by increased demand. At the close of the previous century the master potter seems rarely, if ever, to have left his own narrow boundary; a visit to the county towns, or the neighbouring villages, being the utmost extent of his travel; but now a few of the more enterprising manufacturers had opened business communications with London and such rising towns as Birmingham, Manchester, and Leicester. Occasionally they visited these places themselves; and they consigned their goods direct to the general dealers, instead of selling them, as heretofore, to hawkers and cratemen on the spot. This plan insured more rapid and extensive sales, and lessened the price to the consumer. A few years later a still wider and better market was secured, by the custom of sending out riders on a plan similar to that of the Manchester and Birmingham traders. But the method of business was most primitive. According to Shaw, these riders took no invoice of goods forwarded during their absence; upon returning they rendered no account of sales effected, or of the expenses of their journeys, but merely emptied their pockets of what money was left. They were then paid their wages of five or six shillings a week for so long as they had been absent; and being thus able to benefit themselves at their masters' expense, it was quite common for a traveller to save a sufficient sum to establish himself, as a dealer in earthenware, should a favourable opportunity occur.[1] This was the state of trade about 1740; prior to which date a considerable export trade seems to have been opened through the ports of Hull, Bristol, and Liverpool; the goods being conveyed thither by the Trent, Severn, and Mersey.

[1] History of Staffordshire Potteries, p. 155.

Astbury was amongst the manufacturers who had thus improved his business, and who took occasional journeys to a distance for this purpose. As for centuries previously, it was still the custom to travel on horseback; the state of the roads, and the want of bridges, making other methods of travelling, for the greater part of the year, wholly impracticable. There were stage waggons and coaches which passed through Staffordshire on their way from Manchester to London during the summer months, and conveyances of the same kind had been set up between Birmingham and the metropolis; but for all this it was a sort of fashion for a gentleman, or well-to-do man of business, to set forth on any long journey on his stout hackney, well booted and spurred, his money and clean linen in his saddlebags, and a pair of loaded pistols in their holster. Thus equipped, the traveller went leisurely onwards; generally in the company of others whose destination for the whole, or part of the way, was the same; and this as much for the sake of mutual protection against bands of highwaymen that then infested the country, and more particularly the vicinity of large towns, as for the pleasure of social intercourse. In summer weather, when the foul depths of the miry lanes were partially, if not wholly dried up, and the way along the unenclosed roads and across the heathery commons easy to follow, this method of travel was very congenial to our national characteristics, and our great grandfathers seem thoroughly to have enjoyed it. There were stated places on their route where they baited, dined, supped, and slept; and from the items in old tavern bills which have been preserved to our time, nothing was spared for entertainment. Whether they approached from the northern or west-midland counties, it was customary to sleep the

overnight at St. Alban's, so as to have broad daylight for entering London; and whether the travellers were Manchester manufacturers, Birmingham hardwaremen, or Staffordshire potters, the route usually followed was through Coventry, Daventry, Dunchurch, Stony Stratford, Dunstable, and thence by St. Alban's to London. The stage coaches and waggons seem generally to have followed a more western road; as that by Warwick and Oxford, or else by Banbury, Buckingham, and Aylesbury.[1]

In 1720, during one of these journeys to London, the horse Astbury rode became affected with a disorder in one of its eyes; he therefore, upon arriving at Banbury, consulted the ostler of the inn at which he stayed. The man, well skilled in simple remedies, fetched a nodule of the flint common in the neighbourhood, burnt it to a red heat in the fire of the room in which the traveller sat, and after plunging it into water, reduced it easily into a fine powder. A portion of this he blew into the horse's eyes, to their immediate relief and present cure. Astbury watched this process; and being attracted by the whiteness of the calcined flint, and the easy method by which it had been reduced to powder, it occurred to him, by one of those happy inferences which, empirical as they are, have been so fruitful of results in relation to scientific advance, that the same substance might be found useful as a material in pottery. Willing to try the experiment, he had some flints collected and forwarded by waggon to Shelton, where upon his return they were fired in a kiln after the ware was baked, and then pulverised in a mortar. This powder he mixed with pipe-clay and water, and tried it as a wash for hollow ware. The result exceeding his expectations, he eventually introduced

[1] Advertisement in Aris's Birmingham Gazette, March 16, 1747.

calcined flint into the body of his white ware, with the best possible effect, both as regarded a larger amount of vitrification and a purer colour.[1]

That this discovery would have been made at no distant date is highly probable, since silica enters more or less into the composition of clays ; and a method which would thus insure its introduction in any desired quantity, and in the purest state, was necessarily a scientific desideratum. Their previous use of the siliceous sand from Mole Cop shows that the potters were practically aware of the value of those components which upon fusion become vitreous ; as such added to the density of body and glassiness of surface. It takes nothing from the value of Astbury's discovery, that it was thus made empirically. In the infancy of all arts, rude experiment solves the greatest problems ; and some minds are so constituted as to arrive at positive conclusions more by rapid intuition than by laborious processes of thought ; and this seems to have been the case with Astbury. At that date chemical science, either in practice or theory, had made but little progress ; and in a remote district like the Potteries, no means whatever existed for either self-instruction in the elements contingent to the potter's art, or for basing its advance upon scientific formulæ. Thus every discovery was almost necessarily fortuitous.

It seems probable that Astbury confided the result of his experiments to certain of his friends, and that for a time they tried to keep their secret amongst themselves. At first the flint being used but sparingly, it was kept in cellars and private rooms, and when reduced to powder in large iron mortars, it was passed through hair sieves.

[1] Mr. Wedgwood, as we shall subsequently see, assigns this singular accident to a potter of the name of Heath, instead of to Astbury.

But this process was slow and extremely deleterious; as, in spite of every precaution, the dust was inhaled by the workmen, and produced, as a natural result, lung diseases of various kinds. The sufferance, and consequent medical treatment, of these disorders, soon led to a very general knowledge of the cause; and flint being thus used as an ordinary ingredient in white ware, the demand soon exceeded the supply. To obviate this, the ordinary mills of the district, whether moved by wind, water, or horse power, were brought into requisition; and various kinds of machinery were adapted thereto, to grind or stamp the calcined flint. The increasing demand was thus in some measure met, though the deleterious effects of the general process still remained, and made workmen more and more reluctant to engage in such an occupation; for though the motive power employed made the grinders' labour comparatively easy, they were yet exposed to the baneful effects of the dry and impalpable dust which floated round them as they worked.

At this date, late in the autumn of 1725 or in the spring of 1726, the Earl Gower, either improving his seat at Trentham, or having it freshly decorated, had workmen sent down from London. Amongst these was a painter named Thomas Benson, who, naturally a thoughtful and ingenious man, was struck by repeatedly overhearing, whilst at work, much which was said in relation to the process of flint-grinding now common in the Potteries, and its fatal effects upon those engaged in it. Meditating upon the matter, it occurred to him that the calcined flints might be ground in the same manner as painters' colours; and testing his suggestion by various experiments, he saw its entire practicability. Full of this idea, he seems to have settled in Burslem or its neighbourhood

on purpose to carry it out; and being a poor man he borrowed money of various master potters in order to furnish himself with the necessary vessels and machinery for effecting flint-grinding by his new process, and on a large scale. To the master potters this discovery was one of vital importance, as the demand for their white ware was increasing; and unless they could insure a certain supply of the material which had now become one of its ordinary components, without calling so largely upon the health and vigour of those they employed, their trade must suffer.

The chief and indeed only point which was new in Benson's method, was that of *grinding the flints in water*. In a patent which he took out November 5, 1726, it is stated: 'The flint stones are first wetted, then crushed as small as sand by two large wheels of the bigness and shape of millstones, of iron, and made to turn upon the edges by the power of a water-wheel.' This material is afterwards conveyed into large circular iron pans, 'in which there are large iron balls which, by the power of the water-wheel above named, are swiftly driven round; in a short time the operation is concluded, and by turning a tap the material empties itself into casks.'[1] Two millwrights of the respective names of John Gallimore of Millfield-gate, Lane End, and Joseph Bourne of Bemersley, were the first to adapt the ordinary mill machinery of the district to this new process, or who built mills entirely for the purpose. Of the three mills first erected, one belonged to Astbury; and it was here, at a place called the Ivy-house near Hanley, that flint was first ground in a fluid state. But it was soon discovered that the abrasion of the iron amongst the flints was injurious to ware in which they were used. Accordingly large

[1] Specification of Patent, No. 437.

stone vats or pans were substituted for those of iron; and the crushing or rolling process was effected by stone balls. In relation to this substitution of stone for iron, Benson took out a second patent, January 14, 1732, in which the specification is precisely the same as in his first patent, with the exception, as to the change in material, above stated.[1] Other improvements followed: wooden vats were brought into use, and flat-sided stones instead of rounded ones; subsequently these grinding stones, which at first were ordinary boulder-stones of the district, were replaced by those formed of 'chert,' a hard siliceous mineral found in abundance in the neighbourhood of Bakewell in Derbyshire, and the bottoms of the vats or receivers were paved with smaller portions of the same; experience having shown that the granite boulders procurable in the neighbouring moorlands spoilt the colour of the ware by an excess of carbonate of lime. We shall see at a later stage that Mr. Wedgwood was almost the first to use grinding stones made of Derbyshire chert, instead of granite.[2] Thus, so far from Brindley the engineer having, as usually stated, discovered the valuable though simple process of grinding flints by water, he was only a boy, ten years old, when Thomas Benson took out his first patent; though the subsequent great improvements in the flint mills were chiefly his. In the specifications we find that the crushing and grinding power employed was that of two large wheels of iron or stone 'made to turn upon the edges by the power of a water-wheel,' but it is probable that modifications were slowly introduced, chiefly by the two millwrights already mentioned, Gallimore and Bourne, which assimilated this

[1] Specification of Patent, No. 536.
[2] Wedgwood to Bentley, April 16, 1772.

grinding process more nearly to that of ordinary mill machinery. Brindley's improved flint mill consisted of a large circular wooden vat of from seven to fourteen feet in diameter, the bottom paved with small stones, in which was fixed a central step or gudgeon for carrying the axis of a vertical shaft, the moving power being applied by a crown cog-wheel placed at the top. At the lower part of this shaft, at right angles to it, were four large arms or beams to which the grinding stones were fixed; these also carrying round with them in the vat other loose blocks of granite. Into this receptacle the calcined and broken flints were introduced, and when completely covered with water, the axis was made to revolve with great velocity. The result was soon obtained. The ground flints and water were converted into a cream-like mixture, which was either used in a slop state or dried upon a kiln into a fine powder.[1]

[1] This matter has been so often and so erroneously stated—though a reference to the respective Patents would have at once given the correct dates, and shown the priority of Benson's invention by nine-and-twenty years to the mechanical improvements made by Brindley in the flint-mills—that it may be as well to give the last specification entire. The first is dated November 5, 1726; the second January 14, 1732, and is as follows:—'Thomas Benson:' 'A new engine or method for grinding flint stones, being the chief ingredient used in making of white wares, such as pots and other vessels, a manufacture carried on in our county of Stafford, and some other parts of this our kingdom; that the common method hitherto used in preparing hath been by breaking and pounding the stones dry, and after sifting the powder through fine lawns, which hath proved very destructive to mankind, occasioned by the dust sucked into the body, which being of a ponderous nature fixes so closely upon the lungs that nothing can remove it, inasmuch that it is very difficult to find persons to engage in the said manufacture, to the great detriment and decay of that branch of trade, which would otherwise, from the usefullness thereof, be of great benefit and advantage to our kingdom; that by the petitioner's invention the flint stones are sprinkled with water, so that no dust can rise, and then ground as fine as sand with two large stones, made to turn round upon the edges by the power of a wheel worked either by wind, water, or horses, which is afterwards conveyed into large stone pans made circular, wherein are placed large stone balls, which, by the power of such wheels, are driven round with great velocity; that in a short space of time, the flint stones so broken are reduced to an oiley substance, which by turning of a cock empties itself into casks provided for that purpose; that by this invention all

Thomas Benson shared the fate of too many patentees and inventors. The sums he borrowed to carry out his improvements, and secure his patents, led to embarrassments, and these to ruin; and it is said he died in most reduced circumstances. But the invention proved of immense service to the whole district. Workmen were no longer deterred by risk to their lives and health from engaging in certain branches of the trade; and the hands of the masters thus strengthened, they could supply the increased demand, chiefly for export, which the gradual improvement in their white salt-glazed ware stimulated. To Astbury belongs the merit of having introduced two of the essential components of modern pottery, and this in their purest and best form; and from the date of Benson's improved method of flint-grinding may be traced the extraordinary development of the trade in all its branches. Men were lured from agricultural and other employments to such an extent, that, from about 1735 to 1763, it was difficult for the agriculturists of the surrounding country, and the tradesmen of the adjacent villages and towns, to meet with workmen, or boys for apprenticeship. From 1748 to 1762 the trade had increased two-thirds, and the pot-works in Burslem and its neighbourhood to nearly 150. The population was equally augmented. In 1733 the borough of Stoke-upon-Trent numbered 4,000 individuals; in 1762 these were nearly doubled. At the latter date

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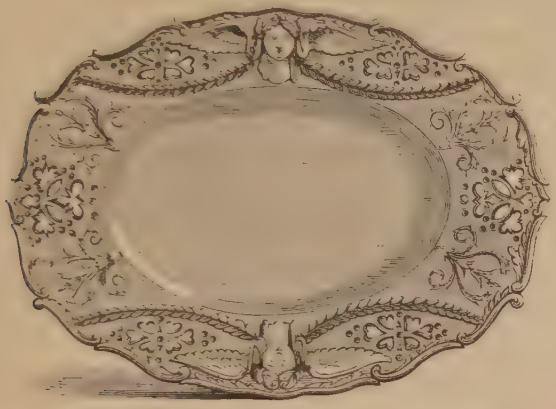
the hazards and inconveniences in working the said manufacture in the cõmon way will be effectually prevented, and in every particular tend to the manifest improvement and advantage thereof, and preserving the lives of our subjects employed therein.' From this it will be seen that even the inventor's name has been misstated. Shaw calls him Edward Bedson (History of Staffordshire Potteries, p. 143), and Ward (History of Stoke-upon-Trent, p. 52) spells the surname the same. The first Patent inserted in the appendix to the latter work has the name correctly, but the date is given as 1713 instead of 1726. In this case the Patent would stand seven years prior to Astbury's discovery.

nearly 7,000 persons were in some way or other connected with the staple trade. Irrespective of those employed directly in the pot-works, numbers were engaged in the coal-mines, in the carrying and shipping trades, and in the salt-works. The duty paid to Government by the potters upon the salt consumed in glazing, was 5,000*l.* annually; and the increase in the amount of shipping employed in the export trade was very great; as vast quantities of ware were now exported from London, Bristol, Liverpool, Hull, and other seaports, to America, the West Indies, and almost every port in Europe.[1] Liverpool, which was the chief seat of the import trade of raw material, increased the number of its ships from 84 in 1709, to 211 in 1739; and after this date the rate of increase was still more rapid. This carriage of raw materials for the Potteries was at this period chiefly effected in winter, by vessels employed during the summer months in whaling and general trade in the northern seas.

The white salt-glazed ware was, at this period, the kind most largely manufactured; and after the general introduction of gypsum moulds its lightness of body and accuracy of ornament were greatly increased. These were secured by what was termed casting, in a manner similar to that pursued in the manufacture of Parian and other modern wares. A thin slip was poured into the mould, from which, after remaining a few minutes, it was poured again. The gypsum having absorbed a certain amount of moisture, a thin lamina adhered to the superficies of the mould the slip had touched, and the thickness of this was added to, by pouring in the liquid again and again, accord-

[1] Petition of the inhabitants of the Potteries to Parliament in 1762 for an Act to form a turnpike road. Quoted by Ward, History of Stoke-upon-Trent, pp. 28, 29.

ing to the amount of body required. The mould was then placed before the fire, and when its contents were sufficiently dry, the cast was removed, by separating the mould into the divisional parts made for this purpose. Form was



(Fig. 46.) WHITE WARE PERFORATED DISH.—BATEMAN COLLECTION.

as yet but little understood or indeed attended to. But the patterns of some of these moulds were ingenious and often tasteful; imitating as they did basket-work, shell-work, and the pretty decorative effects of ears of wheat and barley.

The introduction of flint led to another variation of body, which after successive improvements was brought to the utmost perfection by Josiah Wedgwood. This was the cream-colour ware. Many of the specimens left of his table services in this colour have all the effects of the finest ivory; the tints varying from those of newly skimmed cream to a pale sulphur, and thence to a somewhat deeper colour; but the rich beauty and soft effects are alike exquisite in all. As a vehicle to enamelled colours these tints seem greatly preferable to the glaring and raw-toned whites now universally prevalent as body-colours; and harmonise far more with the other appurte-

nances of the dinner-table. In modern table ware, beautiful as the effects often are, they are comparatively deadened and rendered hard by the mass of cold and raw white around them; whereas, referring back to Wedgwood's masterpieces of this character, we find how exquisitely his mixed greens, his pale blues, and deeply toned reds are led to, as it were, by the warm tint which surrounds them. We have but to recollect how the great painters of the Renaissance used these softened and neutral tints as the constant vehicle of their finest effects, to understand how the eye and judgment of Josiah Wedgwood led him to seek the like results by means artistically the same.

In the earliest specimens of cream-colour, the hue arose from the glaze, which was a mixture of lead ore and a little flint; but subsequently it was made essentially a body colour. A son of Astbury, who seems to have inherited much of his father's ability, was the first to make—and this as early as 1725—what was really cream-coloured ware. In his earliest attempts he used a mixture of marl and flint, but at a later date the finest native clay with flint carefully prepared. The ware was further improved by Aaron Wedgwood and Enoch Booth of Tunstall; the latter of whom was the first potter who fired his ware, thus bringing it into what is called the biscuit state, before dipping it into the fluid glaze. The body of Booth's cream-coloured ware was a compound of Dorsetshire clay, Cornwall clay, and flint; and its glaze a mixture of red lead, flint, and clay.[1] Its next improvement was by a firm of skilful potters of the name of Warburton; till finally, in the hands of Josiah Wedgwood, it became the recipient of the enameller's best art, and

[1] Mayer MSS.

was considered worthy of the tables of nobles and princes.[1]

Astbury's success had stimulated other potters to take various active measures for the improvement of their staple, and the result was a rivalry which occasionally assumed no pleasant form. One of them, named Ralph Shaw, made himself singularly obnoxious by his litigious and overbearing temper. Any variation of process or improvement in kind, however trifling such might be, was instantly claimed by him as his discovery or invention; and though he seems to have used no other materials or processes than such as were in ordinary use—his only variation being a chocolate-coloured body washed inside, and striped outside with a mixture of flint and clay—he yet took out a patent in April 1733,[2] in order to secure his sole rights therein. From this date the feud between himself and the other masters waxed still hotter. Shaw had been the first, as it appears, to observe whilst firing the mixed clays which formed his 'patent pottery,' the different tints which the same body

[1] There can be no doubt but that the superiority of Wedgwood's cream-coloured ware arose partly from great improvements in the processes of its manufacture, and partly from the addition of new materials. At the date of his commencing business for himself in Burslem, in 1759, Cookworthy's two important discoveries of Cornish granite and China clay were well known; both were procurable in moderate quantities, and it is probable that the introduction of these into both body and glaze added to the density of the one and the glossiness of the other; as it also seems likely that Wedgwood fritted his glazes, using red or white lead as the tone of colour required. The modern formula given by Knapp (Chemistry applied to the Arts and Manufactures, vol. xi. pp. 475, 477, 478) is for the body, Dorset clay * 135, China clay 19, flint 52, Cornish granite 6–7; for the raw glaze, white lead 66, Cornish granite 22, flint 12; for the fritted glaze, Cornish granite 30, flint 16, red lead 25, soda 12, borax 17. These materials are calcined in the gloss oven in seggars lined with flint, and then mixed with the following: Frit 26, Cornish granite 15, flint glass 10, flint 9, white lead 40. The whole is afterwards ground with a little oxide of cobalt to increase its whiteness.

[2] Specification of Patent, No. 541.

* These three figures as they stand seem incorrect; the proportion of Dorset clay being far too large.

acquired whilst passing through the various temperatures of the oven; but it was no more than an observation till brought into practical effect by another potter of the name of John Mitchell, who adopted it as a principle for regulating his firing processes, to the manifest improvement of his ware. Shaw considered this practical adaptation as an infringement of his rights; but on other grounds, that of Mitchell washing the inside of his hollow ware with a mixture of flint and clay, he commenced an action against him. This was tried at Stafford during the Midsummer Assizes, in July 1736. Almost all the master potters joined Mitchell in defending it; and as a numerous body of credible witnesses proved the long prior use of the process, both by its discoverer Astbury, and various other persons, Shaw was nonsuited, to the manifest joy of a vast crowd, whom personal interest in the question at issue had gathered from all parts of the Potteries. After a verdict which thus nullified the patent, the presiding judge delivered an address that, considering the opinions then entertained with regard to trade and manufacturing monopolies, was marked by the wisest spirit of personal justice and commercial freedom. He concluded it in words most memorable, when we recollect the intense spirit of manufacturing industry which was then so near development: 'Go home, Potters! make whatever pots you please, only do make them.' These words were repeated by many a winter's fire, and on many an alehouse bench, long after the generation which had heard them had passed away.

Unable to face the competitive triumph his own selfish and exacting temper had evoked, Shaw emigrated, not long after, to France and commenced business there as a potter, in which, without doubt, he was a skilled hand.

His chocolate-coloured ware was excellent of its kind; and besides his valuable observations relative to degrees of heat, which by others were turned to such practical account, he introduced the slip-kiln in an improved form; so that by 1740, it had very generally superseded the slower and more clumsy contrivance of the sun-pan in evaporating superabundant moisture from the prepared flint and clay. We have already seen that the brothers Elers used some early modification of the slip-kiln, and this was probably copied by Astbury. Shaw is said to have obtained his idea from a tilemaker's stove; but his motive seems to have been secresy as to the method of preparing the mixed clays for his chocolate-coloured ware, for he evaporated them on a long trough locked up under cover, beneath which ran the flues from an outside furnace. He also separated one piece of his chocolate-coloured ware from another, whilst in the seggars, by bits of stone; the large amount of silica in the white slip with which it was ornamented giving it a tendency to cohere, one piece to another, during vitrification. It was locally known as 'bit-stone-ware;' but the accidents which often occurred in separating the vessels from their supports, led to the gradual invention of others of various kinds, known technically as 'cockspurs,' 'stilts,' and 'triangles,' but now generally as 'devils;' the making of which has a department to itself in a modern pottery work.

The principle of regulating the heat of the oven by trial pieces was carried still further by the brothers Thomas and John Wedgwood, who about 1740 introduced what they termed 'pyrometrical beads.' These, according to Simeon Shaw, were similar to a small poppy-head out of which had been cut the calyx or cup.[1] They

[1] Chemistry of Pottery, p. 169.

were formed of prepared clay, and the colours the beads had assumed when drawn from the different degrees of heat to which they had been exposed, were used as tests in subsequent firings of ware. Much as some guide to the regulation of heat was at that date both a chemical and philosophical desideratum, these beads but empirically fulfilled the purpose, as the slightest difference in the chemical proportions and qualities of the tests, in the fuel employed, in the vapours present in the oven, or in the visual power of the observer, rendered perfect accuracy, between the test and that which it had to regulate, impossible. However, in the hands of the brothers Wedgwood, who were both extremely skilful men, the use of these pyrometrical beads seems to have insured an amount of accuracy in their firing processes which hitherto had been unknown.

At this date the thoughts and constructive skill of various persons were employed in the invention of some process or instrument by which degrees of heat might be accurately measured. As early as 1749 Mr. Whitehurst of Derby brought forward a pyrometer by which he professed to measure the extension or contraction of metal rods, tobacco-pipes, and glass tubes.[1] Another pyrometer of a still more valuable kind was invented in 1750 by a Mr. John Ellicott of London,[2] and four years later Smeaton, the eminent engineer, produced an instrument for measuring the heat of metals. Ellicott, who had borrowed his idea of a pyrometer from Muschenbroeck a German, constructed it on the principle of relative degrees of expansion, produced in different metals with any certain degree of heat; metals expanding under the influence of

[1] Gentleman's Magazine, vol. xix. p. 362.

[2] Gentleman's Magazine, vol. xxiii. p. 430.

great heat, whilst pure alumina or clay contracts more than one fourth in every dimension. It seems to have been an original observation of this natural law of contraction, and the general research which was then being carried forward in respect to scientific tests that might give accuracy to manufacturing processes, which led Josiah Wedgwood, as we shall see hereafter, to the invention of his pyrometer or measurer of heat—finding, as he probably did, that the test of colour, whereby to regulate the heat of the potter's kiln, was of too empirical a character to be relied on. But even here, there was rather skilful approximation than scientific accuracy; as the same kinds of clay do not diminish equally in bulk in the same degrees of temperatures, and it can only be ascertained with certainty and by indirect means what relation the degrees on Wedgwood's pyrometer bear to the degrees on the mercurial thermometer. This uncertainty, annexed as it seems to pyrometers of all descriptions, arises from basing calculations on the mechanical agencies of heat, contraction, expansion, and fusibility in the fire rather than upon those elements which constitute the principle of heat; and thus in our own day, according to high authority on a question of the kind, science and art are still in want of a thermometer that shall indicate, with accuracy, very intense degrees of furnace temperature.[1]

The white ware now manufactured in considerable quantities—1730–1760, and chiefly for exportation—was occasionally coloured with metallic oxides, glazed with salt or lead ore, and when the articles were produced by competent hands, they were often admirable. Sometimes

[1] Knapp's Chemistry applied to Arts and Manufactures, vol. ii. p. 264, note.

these effects were produced by the old method of mixed clays, and marble, agate, and other natural bodies were thus imitated, whilst the forms were often highly embossed; but the more usual and improved method was to colour the ware in the clay or biscuit state with zaffre, manganese, or copper; the articles being afterwards glazed with black, red, or white lead. Coffee and tea-pots were usually coloured black; but fancy table plates, as those for cake, fruit, or sweetmeats, were varied by scalloped or embossed rims, and so coloured as to resemble the finest tortoise-shell, or the variations and veinings of the ripened melon. Models and moulds were made for these articles in great variety; and when spouts and handles were required, much fancy was displayed in their forms. Small dishes to hold pickles were modelled from natural leaves, and being coloured with oxide of copper in various shades of green, were known as 'pickle leaves.' When the modelling and colouring were alike good, as in the case with Wheildon's ware, and in after days at Etruria, these little dishes were artistic gems, and sought for, as we shall see, as adjuncts to the costliest services of enamelled cream-ware. The tortoise-shell ware was produced by applying manganese ore to the biscuit with a sponge; if darker tints were required powdered ironstone was added; and a variety of other fancy wares, as 'yellow,' 'cauliflower,' and 'melon,' were the result of a like use of ochre, and the metallic oxides. The tints of the agate ware used for knife-hafts and snuff-boxes resulted from zaffre laid delicately on with a hair pencil, and covered with a thin wash or glaze of flint and lead ore. Another variation in colour was effected on the engine-lathe; different coloured slips being blown from the spout of a vessel, and so commingled, whilst the article to be ornamented was thus in rotation. Occasion-

ally, table plates were decorated with a sort of rude grass work coloured green or blue; and just prior to Wedgwood's commencing business at the Ivy House, lines of blue or brown were introduced as an edging to table ware, and hence it was known as 'blue' or 'brown lined ware.' As yet there was neither 'painting,' nor 'printing.' 'The blue painting,' so called, was in use in many of the English potteries prior to 1710, but the art was of the rudest possible character; being mere lines or strokes formed with a stick or finger, and into which powdered zaffre was dusted, whilst clouds or groundwork was a mere smear effected by a rag. The amount of art displayed was not greater than that upon a schoolboy's slate, or the tracings of a savage on the sea-shore sand; and even this amount was not original. Where scenery was depicted it was a mere imitation of designs on the old blue Oriental porcelain, in which truth was outraged and taste disregarded, and the copies were still worse. At a later date this so-called 'blue painting' was a little improved. The lines on the ware were scratched in by a sharp-pointed nail, and women were taught, and largely employed in this branch of rude decoration; but nothing original was attempted, Oriental barbarisms in art being still slavishly copied.

From the period when Astbury used a wash or dip with which to improve the colour of his ware, the introduction of fluid glazes, and their gradual improvement, was simply a matter of time and experience. Concurrent circumstances were also highly favourable to many of the more scientific branches of the art. In various directions in this country, as in France and Germany, men of the keenest faculties were engaged in attempts to imitate foreign porcelain and in the discovery of the earths necessary to its fabrication. Each experimentalist and manufactory had its

favourite substances and methods of fabrication, although the product was pretty generally the same; a soft and semi-translucent body, and an imperfect glaze. But in 1727 and 1729 the French Academy of Sciences published Reaumur's celebrated analyses of both the bodies and glazes of all the known varieties of pottery; and from this date, it was better understood that good porcelain, as well as superior earthenware or fayence, were not the produce of fictitious substances and empirical combinations, but were the result of a proper combination of certain natural substances and chemical agents, and that improvement and discovery could alone follow from confining scientific experiment to the limits thus assigned by nature.

The imperfect character of the salt glaze attracted at length the notice of the more skilful of the Staffordshire potters, and various efforts seem to have been made to improve it, as well as the lead-ore glaze. But the progress was very slow, till in 1745, or a short time after, Aaron Wedgwood and William Littler, who were brothers-in-law and in partnership, following on the track of Astbury's method, began to use a fluid glaze formed of flint, clay, and varying portions of zaffre. Into this they dipped their ware, but as they afterwards fired it in the salt-glaze oven, they do not seem to have depended solely on it for a vitreous coating on their pottery. But it led to the frequent use of fluid glazes, and to slow improvements in their composition. Flint, borax, soda, lead, felspar,[1] and other substances, were in process of time variously added; each manufacturer having his own scale of proportions and list

[1] 'The knowledge of felspar glazes, or those in which felspar more or less forms a marked ingredient, seems to have been introduced into Europe with that of the composition of the Chinese porcelain pastes or bodies; so that as European imitation of the latter extended, the use of felspathic glazes also spread.' — Catalogue, Museum of Practical Geology, p. 54.

of ingredients, of which he usually made a rigorous secret. Soon after the introduction of fluid glazes, namely in 1750, a skilful potter of the name of Enoch Booth, of Tunstall, adopted, as we have already seen, the method of firing his ware once; thus bringing it to the state called biscuit, before dipping it in the glaze. The improvement was both scientifically and practically of great value; though the glaze used by Booth possessed no novel feature, unless it were the addition of red lead to the fluid flint and clay.[1]

By this time, 1750–1755, various secondary and mechanical improvements also lent their aid. The thrower's wheel, which up to 1750 had retained its ancient simplicity, was improved in form and accelerated in movement by an ingenious mechanic of the name of Alsager. The turning lathe was generally employed; the proportions which bring flint and clay into perfect combination had been ascertained; more care was bestowed in levigating and mixing the raw materials; the firing processes were better regulated; the hovels were tiled and made larger; the kinds and proportions of marl in forming seggars which best withstood the highest temperatures were more accurately known; and a greater division of labour, and more method in processes having been introduced in the larger 'pottery banks,' production was accelerated, and its results were more to be depended upon than heretofore.

Such was the condition of the great staple of northern Staffordshire in 1730, the date of Wedgwood's birth, and up to the period when he commenced business at the Ivy House in Burslem in 1759.[2] Comparing it with that

[1] Analyses of specimens of pottery in Mayer MSS.

[2] Godfrey Wedgwood, Esq., of Etruria, supplies for this date that

of 1686, when Plot published his 'Natural History of Staffordshire,' a wonderful improvement had taken place, both as related to the materials and to the processes employed. It was a raising of the potter's art from the lowest possible degree, to that medium condition when, the coarser preparative work accomplished, improvements of a still more effective kind might be expected to take place; and the greatest merit is certainly due to a series of skilful men, Cartwright, Sans, Toft, the brothers Elers, Twyford, Samuel and Thomas Astbury, Shaw, Mitchell, Booth, Bird, Ralph Daniel, Benson, and Alsager, who variously introduced new materials for the body and glaze of their staple, and new processes and appliances in manufacture. Granting that all this was but rude and preparative work, that it was done by empirical methods, and that some of its best suggestions were the result of accident rather than of judgment, it yet accomplished great results, and spared the men of the next generation, and of far higher powers, from a coarse drudgery which would have been otherwise imperative. It takes nothing from the extraordinary merit of Josiah Wedgwood, that the race of potters who preceded him were some of them very skilful and worthy men, of whom too little has been hitherto said, and whom it would be ungenerous, in a literary, artistic and national sense, to forget in any worthy record of their art. Indeed the mere relation of their sterling merit sets that of Wedgwood in a stronger light; as if *they* did so much, who took, as it were, their staple out of the brickmaker and tilemaker's hands, and gave it body, density, glaze and

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of 1754. Ward (History of Stoke-upon-Trent, p. 429) says, 'that Wedgwood, upon the expiration of his five years' partnership with Wheildon, returned to Burslem in 1759.' This last date, as we shall hereafter show, is the correct one.

a better colour, how much higher was the ability and merit of *him*, who when it was stationary, nay declining at this point, grasped it in all its conditions, and by the force of indomitable patience, energy, and unwearying industry, improved them all, and raised a rude empirical handicraft to the condition of an art, to which the severest scientific formulæ of proportions, as the airiest fancy, lent their aid. With Wedgwood the era of true improvement began. Up to this period there had been nothing worthy of the name of decorative art; of colour, proportion, or form. A mixture of different coloured clays, of rude outlines scratched in by a nail, a blue or brown edge line, or a paste-like medallion luted to the surfaces, were the highest efforts of ornamental art. After all that had been done for the improvement of the different bodies, they were at best flimsy and indifferently glazed—the hue of the white ware was bad, and the forms and their adjuncts were ill-proportioned, often angular, and almost always without those flowing outlines that, whilst severely true to geometrical principles, show the utmost grace, delicacy, and beauty. Wedgwood, true to the inductive spirit of an age then opening to his generation and those which would follow, took up his art as a science, and based its improvement upon principles. Wasting his time in no impossible tracks of experiment, he pursued only those which rigidly belonged both geologically and chemically to the art of the potter. He thus produced various bodies of great excellence, by new combinations of materials in common use, or by analysis and trial of those hitherto untested. He improved the ordinary glazes by assimilating their components to those used in the fabrication of the highest class of porcelains; and well aware of the deleterious effects arising from the

use of lead, he tried by long experiment to find a substitute. 'His efforts were unceasing in early life,' wrote the younger Josiah Wedgwood, shortly after his father's death, 'to find a soft glaze made without a combination of lead. In middle life he was too busy to attend to this, but he renewed it towards the close.'[1] But his predilection was for unvarnished surfaces. Hence his most artistic works; the cameos, intaglios, bas-reliefs, and the majority of the vases, lamps, and candelabra, which were all produced in compositions vitrified in the mass; thus requiring no surface glaze. In this he was a true artist; and like the sculptors of the classic age, and the great painters of the Renaissance, a fine judgment and an exquisite natural taste led him to see that the highest effects are obtained from subdued tones, and unabrupt contrasts of colour, light and shade. Considering that he had no early instruction in geometrical principles, his perception of what constituted beauty and truth of form was as marvellous as his chastened taste in ornament. Both may be accounted for on physical grounds: his descent from a long line of potters, in all of whom daily artistic labour had cultivated the eye and perfected the constructive faculty, till in their descendant, this cultivation culminated in the utmost possible genius. These great natural gifts would have availed little, but for the sound and prudential judgment and untiring spirit of industry with which they were allied. These were never at fault. They led him to as quick perceptions and sound conclusions in matters which related to his art, as to a wise and circumspect conduct of its business details. These solid and utilitarian characteristics are often allied with

[1] Mayer MSS. Paper without date in the handwriting of Josiah Wedgwood the younger.

the highest genius; and in Wedgwood the results which arose therefrom were fraught with even more benefit to society than to himself, great as this was. He met one of the necessities arising out of the rapid growth of a great industrial period. As wealth increased, as refinement and education spread, as food became better in quality and more abundant in quantity, the necessity for good and cheap crockery was absolute. Pewter dishes and porringers, wooden cups and platters, would do no longer for a generation whose industry was beginning to be backed by the greatest mechanical inventions. And when Wedgwood met this necessity, in improved fabrics, and higher-class forms, when he placed his excellent cream ware, his Egyptian tea-pots and cream-jugs, his prettily decorated tea-things, and his white jugs and basins, upon homely tables, he did that for his age, which in moral effects was far beyond price. If these were not fully seen till the reign of Victoria, the causes at least had their beginning in the reign of the third George. By his more artistic works, his wonderful cameos, his exquisite bas-reliefs, Wedgwood will be known to posterity; for these will be enshrined in collections and in cabinets, and be preserved with as much care as the gems of antique art. Still they belong to that ideal portion of art, of which the influence and effects, though powerful as expressions of the highest order of imaginative ideas and feelings, are yet fewer in number, and less prolific of results, compared with those which affect more immediately the comfort and domestic refinement of whole communities.

Wedgwood was one of those great industrial leaders whom periods of growing wealth and manufacturing prosperity produce. The long train of antecedent causes which create such, seem also to produce the men who

intuitively rise up to grapple with the difficulties, as also with the necessity for scientific discoveries and improved processes. They are inspired by the genius of their age, because they are equal to or superior to it; and the work they thus effect is incalculable in its benefits.

The reign of George II. was one of advancing commercial prosperity, as during it the exports were nearly doubled, and the internal trade was vastly improved. But the exports of earthenware, which at the commencement of the reign were considerable, particularly from the port of Bristol, began to show a great falling off towards its close; and a white ware much better in form and glazing was imported from France, and with the porcelain bought at the East India Company's sales, served to furnish the tables of persons of wealth and taste. This decrease in our home and export trade arose from the little attention which was paid to form and colour, from a growing improvement in public taste, and from an unwise competition amongst the potters themselves, those of Staffordshire especially, to produce what should be cheap rather than excellent. The salt glaze was also in itself sufficiently imperfect, to make the ware of those who persisted in its use far inferior to that of a few manufacturers who, disregarding the cry for cheapness, used fluid glazes compounded after the then best known formulas. Speaking of the excellence of Worcester porcelain, and the defects of the ordinary English earthenware, its bad colour, its imperfect glaze, and its liability to crack, a person writing in the year 1763 thus observes: 'But this excellence (that of the Worcester porcelain) is confined comparatively to few articles. The tea table indeed it completely furnishes, and some of it is so well enamelled as to resemble

the finest foreign china, so that it makes up costly sets that are broken, without a perceptible difference. But, from whatever cause, this manufacture has never yet found its way to the dining table except in sauce-boats, toys for pickles, and *hors d'œuvres*. If the cause of this defect was communicated to the public through the channel of your magazine, perhaps among the many thousands who read your miscellany, there might be some who would suggest a remedy. Perhaps the Society for Encouraging Arts, &c. might think it an interesting object of their attention, as the manufacture, as far as it now extends, is greatly superior to all others of the kind; and might, as a writer in the public papers observes, not only keep very large sums in the kingdom, which are still paid for a common commodity, but also be improved into a valuable branch of export.'[1] Owing probably to the imperfect nature of the intercourse which still existed between the metropolis and the midland counties, it was unknown to the writer that the improvements he thus desired had been already commenced; and had he travelled to Burslem in Staffordshire, he would have found, in a small pot-work there, a fayence which, for form, delicacy of tint, and richness of glaze, excelled anything which France could produce. And his surprise would have been increased if told that, within the next three years, the amount of its production would be very large, and its home consumption still greater than its foreign export.[2]

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[1] Gentleman's Magazine, vol. xxxiii. pp. 190, 191.

[2] Macpherson, writing under the year 1765, thus records: 'Staffordshire earthenware had lately come into request here and in the neighbouring counties. The increase of this trade since about the year 1760 was surprisingly great.'—Annals of Commerce, vol. iii. p. 429.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

THE SURNAMES OF THE STAFFORDSHIRE POTTERS—THE MAYERS OF NORTON—THE WEDGWOODS — THEIR EARLY SETTLEMENT IN THE MOORLANDS—THEIR INFLUENTIAL POSITION, AND ACCESSION TO WEALTH THROUGH ADVANTAGEOUS MARRIAGES—THE BURSLEMS OF DALE HALL — THE MARRIAGE OF MARGARET BURSLEM TO GILBERT WEDGWOOD—DESCRIPTION OF THE VILLAGE OF BURSLEM —THE CHILDREN OF GILBERT AND MARGARET WEDGWOOD—THE OLD CHURCH OF BURSLEM—THE ERECTION OF THE CHURCHYARD HOUSE AND WORKS—THOMAS WEDGWOOD, FATHER AND SON—THE MARRIAGE OF THE LATTER TO THE DAUGHTER OF A DISSENTING MINISTER—THE POTTERY MADE AT THE CHURCHYARD WORKS—ITS WEEKLY VALUE—THE SONS OF THE SECOND AARON WEDGWOOD —CATHERINE WEDGWOOD—HER THREE MARRIAGES—THE SECOND THOMAS WEDGWOOD'S CHILDREN—THE BIRTH OF JOSIAH WEDGWOOD —DESCRIPTION OF HIS HOME—MRS. EGERTON—JOSIAH WEDGWOOD'S CHILDHOOD AND BOYHOOD—HIS SCHOOLMASTER—TRADITIONS OF HIS SCHOOL DAYS.

CHAPTER V.

THE STAFFORDSHIRE POTTERS.

THE majority of the surnames belonging to the old race of Staffordshire potters are of great antiquity; and till within a very recent period, so few strangers had gone amongst them to exercise their craft, that like the men of the fabled ages, they might be said to have sprung forth from their own soil. In addition to the Tilewrights, whose name was derived from the old Saxon appellation of their trade—Tygel-Wyrthan, makers of tiles, or, as some interpret it, the makers of tygs or drinking cups—there were others whose designations were borrowed from the neighbouring hamlets or holdings from whence they came, or were those of the lesser feudatories, whose dependants, during a period when the relations between land and labour were rapidly changing, took up, as a means of subsistence, the staple trade of the district, which for a century prior to the dissolution began to be, there is little doubt, a source of increasing profit to those who followed it. Early in the seventeenth century, much of the land in Burslem and its neighbourhood had become freehold, and small plots of it were obtainable on easy terms. As these included a right to dig for clay, if not for coal, on the adjacent waste, a man when he had learnt the rude art, had nothing more to do

than to construct his thatched tenement and working sheds, form his sun-pan, dig the clay, and begin business at once. Even where the land was copyhold, as in some of the parishes adjacent, the terms were sufficiently easy to secure ready tenants; and the soil, from its wet and claycy nature, being for the larger part unfitted for agricultural purposes, it was thus that the native population took readily to the potter's trade, pursued it through generations, from grandsire to son, remained stationary for a long period, and drew few accessories to their body from parishes which lay beyond their own moorland.

The various parish registers of the borough of Stoke-upon-Trent, of Leek, and of the moorland villages lying between that town and the Cheshire border, are half-filled with surnames similar to those of the old race of potters; and we may reasonably conclude, from much already stated, that were the necessary documents in existence—the records of the manorial courts, and those of the abbeys of Dieulacres and Hulton—we should find entries relating to the same names long prior to the sixteenth century. Mr. Sleigh, in a paper on the parish registers of Leek, gives an interesting list of old north Staffordshire surnames, amongst which are many similar to those borne by the old race of potters. We have Wedgwood, Toft, Bagnall, Greatbach, Unwin, Warburton, Fenton, Wheildon, Gallimore, and Ridgway.[1] Some of these have been referred to; whilst further on, we shall find the Greatbaches forming a very valuable part of the working staff at Etruria,[2] and the name of Unwin, which

[1] Reliquary, vol. iii. p. 211–212–216–217.

[2] The Wedgwoods of Etruria have been now for more than a century deservedly famous for kindness to their workmen, and for making their services life-long. One of the most interesting sights of Etruria at the

was one of consideration in and prior to the reign of Queen Elizabeth, amongst those of the enamellers who painted the famous Russian service.

The surname of Wedgwood half fills the parish registers of Burslem through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; the names of Cartwright and Bagnall are common; and the Tilewrights, under an orthography of almost endless variation, are nearly as numerous as the Wedgwoods. The Mayers figure largely in the parish registers of Wolstanton, Norton-in-the-Moors, and Newcastle, and this under an orthography as strangely varied as that of the Tilewrights. They trace a descent of immense antiquity, and have been landowners, farmers, abbots,[1] potters, chemists, tanners, and lovers of the fine arts in their several generations. Their common ancestor, Ulviet de Meiri, or Velvet the farmer or cattle-keeper, held the manor of Norton-in-the-Moors sixteen years prior to the Conquest; and after that event, when much of this part of Staffordshire had been laid waste,[2] he was tenant of Robert de Stafford, who had become chief lord of this and many surrounding manors. Ultimately, by marriage, Norton passed as a freehold into their hands; and it is still in a large part possessed by their descendants in the female line: an antiquity of possession as remarkable as any in the history of local tenures. During the civil wars, the Mayers sided with the Royalist party, and for some

present day is the band of hale old men whose services have extended over half a century; and the present able and courteous manager of works (Mr. Greatbach) is a descendant of the men who so ably and worthily assisted their great master in his various labours.

[1] A large brass to the memory of the Abbot Thomas de la Mere in St. Alban's Church is one of the finest specimens of sepulchral records now remaining perfect. The brass is ten feet by four. The Abbot lived in the reign of Edward III. See Gough's Sepulchral Monuments, as also Carter's.

[2] Ward's History of Stoke-upon-Trent, p. 27.

service rendered after the battle of Worcester, King Charles II. presented one of the family with the annexed pitcher- or cup.[1] It is probably of Flemish or German make; and was an appropriate present to one of a name so closely identified with the history of Staffordshire pottery. They resided at Norton Green Hall, which as seen in the next page is probably a modernised version of an older tenement.[2]

(Fig. 47.) KING CHARLES II. CUP.

The name of Wedgwood, originally spelt Weggewode, was derived from a very small rural hamlet or township of 431 acres in the parish of Wolstanton near Newcastle, and was probably so called at some remote period, from its situation in a densely wooded district. Upon mi-

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[1] It is still called 'King Charles's Cup.' Its height is $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches and its diameter at top 3 inches. It is now in the possession of Mr. John Mare, of Etruria.—Note by Joseph Mayer, Esq., of Liverpool. Mayer MSS.

[2] A Benjamin Meare, and probably son of the person to whom King Charles II. presented the cup, was treacherously involved in one of the numerous plots so common in the infamous reign of that monarch. He was a chemist, or as it was then termed, a drysalter, in London; but to escape the vengeance of the Crown he made good his retreat to Milton, a neighbouring hamlet to Norton, where he lived concealed. It soon became well known in Newcastle, Congleton, and Leek, that certain very valuable medicines—especially for cattle—could be obtained from no other part but Milton, and even then no person was allowed to see the man who compounded them on any pretext whatever.—Extract from an autograph letter of Dr. Simeon Shaw, who received the information from a very aged relative. . . . It is probable that some of Benjamin Meare's prescriptions were left to his descendants. Mr. Samuel Mayer, saddler and currier, of Newcastle, a friend and contemporary of Wedgwood, and who supplied the works at Etruria with bosses, straps, and other leather goods, was famous for curing acute rheumatism. The remedy was called 'ragging,' and consisted in scoring the skin of the part affected with a blunt-pointed instrument. In many cases it was a perfect cure; and persons of all ranks came far and wide to consult this benevolent man, who took no fee or gratuity whatever.

grating from their native village, early in the Middle Ages, the Wedgwoods seem to have settled in the moor-

(Fig. 48.) NORTON GREEN HALL.

lands to the north of Burslem, and there by farming and advantageous marriages acquired considerable property. A John Wedgwood resided at Dunwood near Leek towards the close of the fifteenth century, and by marriage with the only daughter and heiress of John Shaw of Harracles, or as it is styled in the Leek registers, 'Harrades,' became a considerable landowner. The issue of this marriage was a son, who in turn had two sons. Of the latter, the elder, who became lord of the manor of Horton near Leek by purchase, was considered of sufficient wealth and standing to be made high collector of the subsidy of 1563; and the younger settled

on an adjacent manor or farm called Mole. The son of the high collector had a grant of arms in 1576,[1] and his son John Wedgwood, who died in 1658 at the age of 87, married a gentlewoman of property named Margaret Ford, whose only sister, Mary Ford, became the wife of Thomas Burslem, grandson of the John Burslem who, as already stated, occupied Dale Hall in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. This family, as their name implied, belonged to the village; they had long occupied its chief tenement, possessed the greatest part of the land, were of much note; and when in course of time Thomas Burslem, lacking a male heir, made his two daughters Margaret and Catherine his co-heiresses, one of them, Margaret, found a suitor amongst her maternal uncle John Wedgwood's kinsmen, and this in the person of Gilbert Wedgwood, grandson of the Richard who had first settled at Mole. The other sister married a neighbouring gentleman of the name of William Colclough, who resided from 1620 till his death in 1662 at the Overhouse in Burslem, a tenement belonging to his wife. The only son of this gentleman dying without issue in 1665, his Burslem estate descended to his second cousin Burslem Wedgwood, the grandson of Gilbert and Margaret Wedgwood.

Burslem was at this period a mere village of thatched cottages somewhat crowded together on the top of a low-lying hill; the old church and Dale Hall resting in the hollows beneath it; whilst the Overhouse, or as it was occasionally called, the Upperhouse, a pleasant manor or farm-house, stood at the top of the village, in a part known as the Brownhills, originally a russet-tinted hilly waste, but then divided into various enclosures, called

[1] These are appended to Plot's Map of 1682.

the Oldfields, Oxney Croft and the Jenkins.[1] The Overhouse stood opposite the Jenkins, and this being the

(Fig. 49.) OVERHOUSE, BURSLEM.

highest land in or immediately around Burslem, it seems to have been previously used for the site of a mill; but it became afterwards celebrated as the spot on which, in 1758, the great Brindley erected one of the earliest of his mills for improved flint-grinding.[2] Comparatively crowded as the houses were together, most of them had a patch of garden ground; and occasionally both croft and garden. Wide strips and angular patches of the original waste intersected the lane-like streets, and on these, in

[1] The Overhouse, as given in the illustration, is a comparatively modern erection; but it occupies the site of the old timber-built manor-house.

[2] Indenture of lease between Catharine Egerton, of the Overhouse, and Thomas and John Taylor, potters, of Burslem, of the enclosures called the Brownhills, and the tenement called the Millhouse, signed the 25th day of February, 1752.—Mayer MSS.

many places, were piled vast mounds of sherds and ashes; whilst around were the hollows from which the potters dug their clay, as at an earlier day they had their coal. In some places the waste had a wider extent, and yet free from the potters 'shord rucks' was intersected by pleasant pathways and little streams; and occasionally where the springs were not gathered into pools, but stagnated near the spot where they rose, a row of stepping stones crossed the rushy places. The houses stood singly or in groups; and behind most of them were to be seen thatched working sheds and potters' hovels. The alehouses were very numerous; and their signs creaking in the wind, answered to such names as the 'Turk's Head,' the 'Jolly Potters,' the 'Court House,' the 'Bear,' the 'Talbot,' the 'Red Lion,' the 'George and Dragon,' or the 'Packhorse.' A farmyard, a barn, a smithy, a croft, or a wheelwright's shop, broke the line or group of pot-works and tenements; and here and there in the more public portion of the village the butcher had his open shop-baulk, the barber displayed his pole, the cobbler his shoes; and crossed pipes, dangling balls of worsted or string, and pounds of candles, showed against some of the windows that small goods of a very miscellaneous kind were to be had within. The lanes, for highways they could be scarcely called, which led into the village from the surrounding neighbourhood, were of the worst possible description; that leading through Tunstall to Lawton being literally a 'hollow-way,' and in winter-time all but impassable, even to pack-horses.

Such had been, very probably, the condition of Burslem for two or three centuries; the only perceptible change being a slow augmentation of inhabitants, a fresh enclosure of the surrounding land, or the erection of a new

Fig. 50.) VIEW OF MODERN BURSLEM.

tenement or pot-work. In Domesday it is described as waste, with two acres of alder; but if the potters' tenements had been swept away by a host of barbarian soldiery, it had at least received and retained its name, being spelt Barcardeslim in that great document, and otherwise very variously in subsequent records and charters. Of these many fanciful interpretations have been given; but there can be no doubt that the name of the village was partly derived, like Newcastle-under-Lyme, Audley-under-Lyme, and other places in the same tract of country, from its situation upon the edge of the great woodland which divided Staffordshire from Cheshire, and which in ancient times stretched considerably to the east. The woods of Chell and Sneyd, which partly existed till within a recent period, were, there is reason to think, remnants of this great sylvan barrier, and these came close upon the northern and eastern boundaries of the village; the use of wood in the potters' kilns, till probably the fifteenth century, and its consumption in the making of panniers or crates, being amongst the causes which denuded the environs of the village of its ancient oak and beech trees.[1]

[1] On the margin of an old map of Staffordshire, the name is said to have been spelt Bwlyeardslyme, and the interpretation given is that of 'the plot of ground where is quarried the clay for bowls,' but none of the many forms under which the name is found in records and deeds agree with either this spelling or its interpretation. The final syllable points clearly to the situation of the village upon the borders of, or within, the great woodland, which at an early period separated the more civilised and better known portions of England, south of the Trent, from the barbarous and inaccessible region comprised in our modern counties of Lancashire and Cheshire, or what Camden terms 'the country lying beyond the mountains towards the western sea.' In Latin documents of the Middle Ages this woodland was naturally termed *limes*—the boundary; and this may have even had a prior signification in relation to the great Roman highway, named by the Saxons Watling Street, which crossed this forest on its way to Chester. 'The Roman armies,' says an excellent writer, 'in their advance into a barbarous country, were accustomed to raise earthen ramparts round the camps in which they rested between successive days' marches. If they intended, as was generally the case, to return for a second or third campaign, they opened pathways through

Gilbert Wedgwood and Margaret Burslem were married in about 1612, and seem at first to have resided in the Moorlands, as their eldest son Burslem was baptized at Biddulph, a village on the Cheshire border, in 1614. They subsequently removed to Burslem; and as Dale Hall was pulled down prior to 1619, they must have occupied some other tenement; for the Overhouse, which became the family residence upon the demolition of the old hall, was tenanted by Margaret Colclough and her husband, as also possibly by Thomas Burslem, her father, who was still living in 1619.

A family of six sons and two daughters sprang from this marriage of Gilbert Wedgwood with the daughter and co-heiress of Thomas Burslem. The line of the eldest son, Burslem Wedgwood, was enriched as we have seen in 1655–6 by the addition of the Colclough share of the Burslem property, but it was briefly enjoyed. The third Burslem Wedgwood, great-grandson of Gilbert Wedgwood, died in 1703, just as he had attained his majority, and his property, with the exception of what was entailed, as also a portion which his father, the second Burslem Wedgwood, had sold in 1676, passed to three married sisters, and by them was subsequently sold.

the woods or across the morasses, marked out by two parallel trenches, and to these they gave the name of *limites*. If they contemplated a more permanent occupation, they proceeded to build a road in place of the *limes*, excavating the loose soil between the trenches, and filling in the space with successive layers of concrete and squared stones raised often to a considerable height above the surrounding country. Hence the Watling Street and the Roman roads which strike northward into Scotland are found to connect a series of Roman encampments, many of which in process of time germinated into cities. But if they were uncertain about the permanence of their advanced conquests, they were in the habit of drawing a transverse line of communication, to which the same name of *limes* was also given, to connect their outposts laterally; and this line they sometimes protected by a rampart of earth, a ditch, and a palisade. This fortification seems also to have borne sometimes the name of *limes*, but this was not a correct use of the term; the proper name was *vallum*.—Quarterly Review, No. 213, pp. 136, 137.

Thomas and Aaron Wedgwood, the third and sixth sons of Gilbert, were those destined, through their descendants, to play so conspicuous a part in the history of their neighbourhood and its great staple. Their respective occupations are unknown; but they seem to have shared, with their brothers and sisters, in such part of the family property as was not entailed on the eldest son, and this probably secured to each the means of independence. But both Thomas and Aaron had many children, and this division of property amongst a second generation must have greatly diminished such portions as were not entailed. Accordingly we find that several members of this second descent took up most wisely the trade of potting; and backed by some capital, good natural ability, and the position of their family, they became in the course of a few years comparatively substantial men, and amongst the foremost potters of their native village. Of these, three were the sons of the first Aaron, the son of Gilbert, and were respectively named Thomas, Aaron, and Richard. Thomas, born in 1655, known afterwards as Dr. Thomas Wedgwood of the 'Red Lion,' Aaron his brother born in 1667, and Richard born in 1668, settled down in adjoining tenements, in a central part of Burslem leading to the Brownhills, on what, from its position, was doubtless a portion of inherited property.

The parish church of Burslem, which for centuries was one of several chapelries dependent on the parent church of Stoke, is on the usual small scale of such dependencies, when erected in remote and thinly peopled districts. Originally, without doubt, it was quaint and picturesque; but the old nave of plaster and timber was pulled down in 1717, and one of brick erected in its stead. This was lengthened in 1788, to meet the wants of a vastly in-

creased population, so that thus portionally rebuilt and added to, in the barbarous style peculiar to church-wardens and country bricklayers, all about it in the

(Fig. 51.) BURSLEM CHURCH.

present day is commonplace and ugly enough, with the exception of the old Norman tower of rude stone-work, which, coeval with the foundation of the church in the twelfth or thirteenth century, bears on it the marks of grey antiquity. Though built in a hollow beneath the hill on which the village stood, its situation must originally have been very picturesque, when the moorland with its turf and furze-clad undulations swept away towards hamlet and woodland in the grey distances.

In the middle of the seventeenth century, this solitude was yet unbroken, except that the moorland around the graveyard had been enclosed and formed into pastures

of various sizes, and that, in the upper part of the lane leading down from the villages, a few half-timbered cottages had been built. The lane passed the church: opposite to it was a pasture, or more probably a strip of moorland, called Cross Hill; and on the side of the churchyard farthest from the village was a field known as the 'Barn field.' A portion of this last was enclosed off, and on it, facing and close to the lane, stood a large half-timber and thatched house; a pot-work adjoined the gable, farthest from the church; and at the rear of the enclosure, and next the churchyard wall, stood the usual barn, stable, and stacks of a small homestead.

(Fig. 52.) CHURCHYARD, HOUSE, AND WORKS.

Here it was that Thomas Wedgwood, born in 1660, son of Thomas, son of Gilbert, and cousin to Aaron and Dr. Thomas Wedgwood, who had settled near the Brownhills, commenced business as a potter about 1680

or 1684. It is not known if this estate was purchased or inherited, but it was strictly entailed. It may have been purchased when the second Burslem Wedgwood sold some meadows near the church in 1676, and it is probable that Thomas Wedgwood or his father erected both tenement and pot-work. The former married and had nine children. The eldest of these was a son named likewise Thomas, born in 1687; and of his five daughters, one married Samuel Astbury, related to, if not identically the eminent potter; another her second cousin, Dr. Thomas Wedgwood junior; and a third Moses Marsh, who was also a considerable potter, living in the middle of the village.

Thomas Wedgwood of the third generation was also brought up as a potter, and served his time with his father at the Churchyard works. Of his early life little is known, except that whilst still under age he married the daughter of a dissenting minister named Stringer, who, from the passing of the Corporation Act in the early part of the reign of Charles II., had lived in Burslem or its neighbourhood in comparative obscurity; though occasionally preaching to a scattered congregation. Mr. Stringer, whose surname bespeaks him to have been a native of the adjacent county of Shropshire, was a man of superior attainments and high moral worth—

> 'the dictate of whose inward sense
> Outweighs the world.'

and this noble characteristic did not certainly die with him. Young as his daughter Mary was when she became the wife of the young potter, it seems to have been a marriage accredited by both families, as a settlement was made upon her out of her husband's estate. There are also indications that she had some little property of her own.[1]

[1] Will of Thomas Wedgwood, 1739, Registry of the Diocese of Lichfield.

Children were soon quickly gathered round the young couple; and of these, seven were older than their father's youngest sister. With thus two generations born and growing side by side, there could be no room in the Churchyard tenement; and the young couple seem to have settled in the centre of the village; where at a small pot-work known afterwards as 'Graham's,' Thomas Wedgwood the younger commenced the making of moulded ware about 1707 or 1708. This was a higher branch of the business than that followed by his father; the Churchyard works only turning out black and mottled ware of the kind commonly sold to the cratemen; consisting of coarse baking dishes, milk-pans, crocks, pots, jugs, porringers, and pitchers. In a very valuable document, drawn up by Josiah Wedgwood himself in 1776, we have the weekly expenses and profit of a pot-work of this sort; and as the one referred to was evidently that of his grandfather Thomas Wedgwood, the information has a double interest.

Men necessary to make an Oven of Black and Motled, per week, and other expences—

	£	s.	d.
6 Men, 3 @ 4*s.* ℔ week and 3 @ 6*s.* . .	1	10	0
4 Boys @ 1*s.* 3*d.*	0	5	0
1 cwt. 2 qrs. Lead Ore, @ 8*s.*	0	12	0
Manganese	0	3	0
Clay, 2 Cart-Load, @ 2*s.*	0	4	0
Coals, 48 Horse-Loads, @ 2*d.*	0	8	0
Carr^e^ of do. @ 1½*d.*	0	6	0
Rent of Works @ 5*l.* ℔ ann^m^	0	2	0
Wear and Tear of Ovens, Utensils, &c. 10*l.* ℔ ann^m^	0	4	0
Straw for packing, 3 Thrave, of 24 Sheaves to the Thrave, @ 4*d.*	0	1	0
The Master's Profit, besides 6*s.* for his Labor .	0	10	0
	£4	5	0

N.B.—The Wear and Tear, Master's Profits, and some other things, are rated too high. 4*l.* per Oven-full is thought to be sufficient, or more than

sufficient, for the Black and Motled Works of the largest kind, upon an Average, as the above work was a large one for those times.[1]

POT-WORKS IN BURSLEM ABOUT THE YEAR 1710 TO 15.

Potters' Names	Kinds of Ware	Suppos'd amo^{t} £	s.	d.	Residence
Tho^{s} Wedgwood .	Black and Motled	4	0	0	Church Yard
John Cartlich . .	Moulded . . .	3	0	0	Flash
(Small) Rob^{t} Daniel	Black and Motled	2	0	0	Holehouse
(Do.) Tho^{s} Malkin .	Do.	3	0	0	Hamel
Rich^{d} Malkin . .	Do.	2	10	0	Knole
Dr. Tho^{s} Wedgwood	Brown Stone . .	6	0	0	Ruffleys
W^{m} Simpson . .	. . . . .	3	0	0	Stocks
Isa Wood	. . . . .	4	0	0	Back of George
Tho^{s} Taylor . . .	Moulded . . .	3	0	0	Now Mrs. Wedgwood's
W^{m} Harrison . .	Motled	3	0	0	Bourn's Bank
Isaac Wood . . .	Cloudy	3	0	0	Top of Robin's Croft
John Adams . . .	Black and Motled	2	10	0	Brick House
Marshes	Not work'd . . :				Top of Dan$^{l's}$ Croft
Moses Marsh . .	Stone ware . . .	6	0	0	Middle of the Town
Rob^{t} Adams . . .	Motled and Black	2	10	0	Next on the East side
Aaron Shaw . . .	Stone and Dipp^{d} w^{t}	6	0	0	Next on the East side
[2](Conick) Sam^{l} Cartlich	Motled	3	0	0	Next to the South
Aaron Wedgwood .	D^{t} and Black . .	4	0	0	Next to Red Lyon
Tho^{s} Taylor . . .	Stone Ware and Freckled				Next to the North
Moses Shaw . . .	D^{it}	6	0	0	Middle of the Town
Tho^{s} Wedgwood .	Moulded . . .	2	10	0	D^{o} now Graham's
Isaac Ball	. . . . .	4	0	0	S^{o} West End of the Town
Sam^{l} Edge . . .	Stone ware . . .	6	0	0	Next to the West
Tho^{s} Locket . . .	Mottled	3	0	0	Late Cartliches
Tunstals	Not work'd . .	3	0	0	Opposite
(Double Rabbit) John Simpson	. . . . .	3	0	0	West End of the Town
R^{d} Simpson . .	Red Dishes &c. .	3	0	0	The Pump, West End
Tho^{s} Cartwright .	Butter Pots . .	2	0	0	West End of the Town
Tho^{s} Mitchel . . .	Not work'd . . .				Rotten Row
Moses Steel . . .	Cloudy	3	0	0	D^{o}
John Simpson, Chell	Mottled and Black	4	0	0	D^{o}
John Simpson, Castle	Red Dishes and Pans	3	10	0	D^{o}

[1] Mayer MSS.—This document is written on the fly-leaf of the one just quoted, and containing much curious and authentic information, we give it entire. It is in Wedgwood's unmistakable handwriting, and was drawn up by him in 1776. It is endorsed 'Memorandums for the Pottery.'

[2] The words inserted above the surnames are those by which the potters were best locally known. Thus, John Simpson was called 'Double Rabbit.' The custom still prevails in both North and South Staffordshire, and many curious facts relative thereto are to be found in the Reports of the Commissioners for Inquiring into the Condition of the Manufacturing and Labouring Population.

Potters' Names	Kinds of Ware	Suppos'd amo^{t} £	s.	d.	Residence
Isaac Malkin . .	Mottled and Black	3	0	0	Green Head
R^{d} Wedgwood . .	Stone ware . . .	6	0	0	Middle of Town
John Wedgwood .	Not work'd . .	Suppos'd			Upper House
Jn^{o} or Joseph Warburton	. . . . .	6	0	0	Hot Lane or Cobridge
Hugh Mare . . .	Motled	3	0	0	D^{o}
Rob^{t} Bucknal . .	D^{o}	4	0	0	D^{o}
Ra. Dan^{l}	. . . . .	3	0	0	D^{o}
Bagnal.	Butter Pots . .	2	0	0	Grange
Jn^{o} Stevenson . .	Clowded. . . .	3	0	0	Sneyd Green
	Clouded	3	0	0	D^{o}
H. Beech. . . .	Butter Pots . .	2	0	0	Holdin
		139	10	0	@ 46 weeks to the year is 6417*l.*

Annual produce of the Pottery in the beginning of the 18th century in Burslem Parish.

Burslem was at this time so much the principal part of the Pottery, that there were very few pot-works anywhere else.

Potters at Hanley, the beginning of the 18th cent^{y}:

Joseph Glass .	Clowdy and a sort of Dishes painted with diff^{t} color'd slips, and sold at 3*s.* and 3*s.* 6*d.* ℔ doz.
W^{m} Simpson .	Clowdy and Motled
Hugh Mare .	Black and Motled
John Mare . .	D^{o}
R^{d} Marsh . .	Motled and Black. Lamprey Pots and Venison Pots
John Ellis . .	Butter Pots, &c.
Moses Sandford	Milk Pans and Small Ware

Only one Horse and one Mule kept at Hanley. No Carts scarcely in the Country. Coals carried upon Men's Backs. Hanley Green like Wolstanton Marsh. Only 2 houses at Stoke [meaning Potteries] Ward's and Poulsons.

As none of the pot-works at this period had more than one oven, and the profits of the largest, as thus fixed by Josiah Wedgwood at 16*s.* weekly, must have been inadequate to meet the wants of so large a family, even if we take the value of money in the reigns of Queen Anne and George I. at double its present worth, it is evident that Thomas Wedgwood, the grandfather of Josiah Wedgwood, like others of his name, who had embarked in the potting trade, had a small independence on which to rely. According to the notions which then prevailed, he was

looked upon as a man of substance. He served as churchwarden, an office far more regarded in that day than our own, and purchasing himself a pew in the body of the church for 7*l.*[1] he sat as one of the gentry of the village, amongst his neighbours and kinsmen. A needless piece of extravagance, unless he were a man of some position and wealth; as many of the master potters, with families as large as his own, seem to have been contented with two or three sittings.

Added to the little independence which arose from the rental of field and tenement, Thomas Wedgwood of the Churchyard probably farmed on a small scale, as did many of the master potters of his day. A croft or two of hay, one or more of oats or barley, and a cow, or a few sheep, grazing on the adjacent waste, would help much towards household maintenance. Meat was very cheap, beef and good moorland mutton not being at that date more than twopence a pound; oaten bread was universally eaten in the district except at festivals like Christmas and the wakes; and the whole style of living was, ordinarily speaking, simple in the extreme.[2]

As the potters thus passed slowly through the social changes begot by the improvements in their staple, the growth of trade, and the general well-being of the country—which, from the period of the Revolution, in spite of absurd fiscal restrictions, maladministration by

[1] This information is taken from an old plan of the interior of the church, evidently drawn up with a view to pew-letting. It is on parchment, and without date. The entry within the appropriate pew space is, 'sold to Thos Wedgwood, oth Church Yord, for 7*l.*'—Mayer MSS.

[2] Even later in the eighteenth century the price of food was still low in the same district. From an old household book kept at Whitmore, near Newcastle, from 1738 to 1741, we gather as follows:—Wheat from 4*s.* to 4*s.* 6*d.* per bushel, barley 3*s.*, oats 1*s.* 4*d.*, if for sowing 2*s.* 6*d.*, a calf from 6*s.* to 9*s.*, a fat ewe 5*s.*, beef 1*d.* to 2*d.* per pound, pork 2*d.* per pound. — Pitt's Topographical History of Staffordshire, p. 380.

party, and unnecessary wars, made steady and unbroken progress—it is pleasant to observe something like the growth of education amongst them. The first Aaron Wedgwood, the son of Gilbert, who lived through the period of the Protectorate and the reign of Charles II., and who, for anything we know to the contrary, may have been one of the first potters of his race, had to attest his business papers with a hieroglyphic which passed as his mark;[1] but his sons, who settled in the centre of the village, Thomas, Aaron, and Richard, seem all to have acquired such small measure of education as was then thought sufficient for even men of a superior rank, unless they were designed for one of the learned professions.

The second Aaron Wedgwood, like his cousin the first Thomas Wedgwood of the Churchyard, made mottled and black ware, and the weekly produce of his oven was the same. He was known as a skilful lead-ore potter, and of his sons, three played a very important part in the history of their family. One of them named Richard, born in 1700, settled at Spen Green in Cheshire, and there as a cheesefactor acquired a considerable fortune; visiting the rural markets of Leek, Congleton, Uttoxeter, Tamworth, Stafford, and other of the midland towns, and thence despatching his goods to such great centres of a then rapidly increasing manufacturing industry as Manchester and Birmingham, and for export to Liverpool. He had but two children, a son and a daughter. To the latter, who eventually by the death of her brother inherited her father's wealth, he gave an excellent education, and this in due season bore its fruits, as we shall see. Two other

[1] Lease relating to the Church Meadow Hays, drawn up in 1687.—Mayer MSS.

sons of Aaron, Thomas and John, the one born in 1703, the other in 1705, were trained in their father's works, and both were most skilful hands, the one as a thrower, the other as a fireman;[1] but taking advantage of the improvements in their staple and the current demand, they commenced about the beginning of the reign of George II. business for themselves, as white stone salt-glaze potters, and by manufacturing ware of a superior quality both as to form and glazing, they opened an excellent

(Fig. 53.) WHITE-WARE JUG WITH FOLIATED HANDLE.

trade, chiefly export, for themselves, and acquired a large fortune. They also erected the first brick-built manufactory in Burslem,[2] and in 1750 a large and commodious dwelling-house, which for its size and importance became locally known as the 'Big House,' a name it still retains. The owners were thought extravagant, and it was altogether considered so marvellous a construction that people came from a long distance to look at it.[3]

[1] Shaw's History of Staffordshire Potteries, p. 157.

[2] Ward's History of Stoke-upon-Trent, p. 234.

[3] Mr. Aaron Wedgwood, of Burslem, received this information from his grandmother.

Dr. Thomas Wedgwood, who had settled down in the tenement known as the 'Red Lyon,' probably from some ancient sign or from his combining the calling of an innkeeper with the trade of a potter, manufactured the ordinary lead-glazed ware of the day; but his son, known as Dr. Thomas Wedgwood junior, and who married Catherine the eldest daughter of the first Thomas Wedgwood of the Churchyard, erected a pot-work at a place called the Ruffleys, where he carried on a considerable business for that period. In addition to brown stone ware [1] he manufactured marble, agate, cauliflower, and melon wares; and being a good chemist, many of his imitations were admirable. He excelled also in embossed work, and paid much attention to the construction of moulds and the art of modelling. One of his apprentices, named Aaron Wood, subsequently acquired great local celebrity for his skill as a modeller.

On the premature death of the last Burslem Wedgwood in 1703, the entailed property, amongst which was the Overhouse, descended to John Wedgwood, the grandson of Gilbert and Margaret. He was the eldest brother of the first Thomas of the Churchyard, and being as it seems also a potter, he, upon taking up his residence at the Overhouse, erected a pot-work in its rural precincts, and carried on business there from about 1703 till his death in 1705. He left an only daughter named Catherine, who inherited all his property; and who, either in her father's lifetime or after, married her cousin Richard, the brother of Aaron the potter, and the first Dr. Thomas Wedgwood. This Richard had a large pot-work, and, manufacturing brown stone ware in considerable quantities, probably added to the family wealth.[2] He died in

[1] Ante, p. 191. [2] Ibid. p. 191.

1718, and two years later his only son John Wedgwood died, whilst yet a minor. Thus independent and even wealthy, and occupying the Overhouse, Mrs. Catherine Wedgwood became the great lady of the place. She remarried twice, and by both marriages added evidently to her wealth and social rank. Her second husband, Thomas Bourne, Esq., was of an ancient local family, and we find him in 1721,[1] 1722,[2] and 1725,[3] leasing and purchasing land in various parts of Burslem. He died in 1729, and subsequently Mrs. Catherine Bourne[4] married her third husband, Rowland

[1] Indenture of lease made the 10th day of September 1721, between Thomas Bourne, of Burslem, gentleman, and Thomas Marsh, of the Sandy Butts, in the said parish of Burslem, yeoman. The latter to hold a certain messuage, outbuildings, and garden, and certain parcels of land called Cross Meadow, in two parts divided, the Bridge Meadow, the Butthorn Croft, the Diglakes, and the little piece of meadow lying before 'ye old farm,' for the term of two years, at 40*s.* per year. The windows of the tenement to be kept in repair with good white glass.

[2] Indenture made 25th day of October, 1722, as to the purchase of the Meadow Hills, Burslem, by Thomas Bourne, gentleman, of Burslem, off Thomas Cartlooth, of Tunstall, Ground Collyer, Thomas Mitchell, of Burslem, earth potter, Ralph Cartwright, of Brown Edge, yeoman, and Robert and Richard Cartwright, of Sneyd, yeomen.

The Meadow Hills adjoined the Sandy Butts owned by the said Thomas Bourne.

[3] Indenture of lease made the 5th day of November, 1725, between Thomas Bourne, of Burslem, gentleman, and John Taylor, of Burslem, earth-potter, of that parcel of land called the Great Oldfield with the meadow lately taken out of the same, for the term of twenty-one years, at a yearly rental of 7*l.*

The land not to be ploughed or otherwise tilled, or to be turned up for coal or cannel.

Signed in the presence of Thomas Marsh and Dr. Thomas Wedgwood, junior.—Mayer MSS.

[4] A survey of part of Mrs. Katharine Bourne's lands lying in the parish of Burslem, in the county of Stafford.

	A.	R.	P.
Farthest Oxney Croft	5	3	19
Middle Oxney Croft	5	3	13
Near Oxney Croft	6	2	24
Oxney Croft Meadow	5	1	20
Over Smallthorne	11	2	30
Lower Smallthorne	8	3	3
Little Oldfield	5	0	0
Oldfield	5	2	2
Meadow in the Oldfield	1	0	21
Diglake	3	0	30
	59	0	2

The lands hereafter mentioned are in the holding of Moses Marsh:—

	A.	R.	P.
Meadow Hill	2	1	3
Farthest Allenshaw	4	2	35
Near Allenshaw	3	1	21
Ellgreave	6	0	10
Smithy Butts	1	3	10
Farthest Dale Hall Croft	4	2	28
Near Dale Hall Croft	1	3	10
Near Cow Hay	3	3	0
Farthest Cow Hay	3	3	34
Winkles Meadow	3	2	8
Barn Croft	0	2	28
Stepy Hill Croft	0	2	18
Stepy Hill	0	3	24
	38	0	32
Total is	97	0	34

Egerton, Esq., a gentleman of good position. Henceforth we know her as Mrs. or 'Madam' Egerton; the name by which her memory still lingers in the traditions of Burslem, as the good gentlewoman who was kindly to her neighbours, benevolent to the poor, as also a stern reprover of drunkenness, immorality, and vice in all its shapes. Mr. Egerton and herself possessed property in other parts of Staffordshire besides Burslem, and they grant leases in their joint names in 1740[1] and 1741.[2] In 1742 Mr. Egerton died. From this date his widow acted for herself, and attested deeds and leases in 1746,[3] 1752,[4] and

[1] Indenture of agreement made the 25th day of March 1740, between Rowland Egerton, of Burslem, gentleman, and Catherine his wife, on the one part, and William Doorbar, husbandman, of Burslem Millhouse, on the other part. The said William Doorbar to lease the tenement he doth now inhabit, as also all those parcels of land commonly known by the name of the Brownhills, as the same is now into three parts divided, and all appurtenances thereto belonging. To be held for the term of fifty years (if the said Catharine Egerton so long live), at the yearly rent of nine pounds ten shillings. The Egertons to pay all taxes and keep the cottage in good and tenantable repair, except the windows, which the said William Doorbar is to make good at his cost, as well as 'maintain a cock, if the same be necessary,' and not to carry the hay, straw, or manure, except for use on the premises. Signed by Rowland and Catherine Egerton, in the presence of Isaac Nodin, Sarah Marsh, and John Henshall.

[2] Indenture of agreement made the 2nd day of March 1741, between Rowland Egerton, of Burslem, gentleman, Catherine his wife, and Francis Low, of Cheadle Millhouses, husbandman, of the one part, and John Tunnicliffe, of Cheadle, yeoman, of the other part. The said Cheadle Millhouses and certain parcels of land were leased to the said Francis Low by Catherine Egerton, then Bourne, in 1729, for the term of twenty-one years, at an annual rent of 36*l*. The remaining term of the lease disposed of by the said Rowland and Catherine Egerton to the said John Tunnicliffe.

[3] Indenture of agreement made the 25th day of March 1746, between Catherine Egerton, of Burslem, widow, and Joshua Beech, of Burslem, blacksmith, as to the lease of that parcel of land called the Little Oldfield, for the term of fifty years (provided the said Catherine Egerton should so long live), at an annual rent of six pounds ten shillings. The lessor to pay all taxes, and to allow one day in every year to the said leasee a team and a man to drive it for the purpose of carrying manure to the said premises. Signed by Catherine Egerton and Joshua Beech, in the presence of Thomas Taylor and John Henshall.

[4] Indenture of agreement made the 25th day of February 1752, between Catherine Egerton, of Burslem, widow, of the one part, and John and William Taylor, of Burslem, potters, of the other part. The said Catherine Egerton to let to John and William Taylor that cottage or dwelling known as Burslem Millhouse; and also those parcels of land now into several parts divided, known as the Brownhills. The said J. and W.

1755,[1] with the same firm signature as heretofore. In these latter years she must have been very old, and yet her handwriting is marked for its clearness and force. It cannot be regarded without great interest, considering how long the hand that wrote has crumbled into dust, the sterling character of the writer, and how beneficial her influence must have been on that branch of her family who were eventually to succeed to her inheritance.

The last child of the first Thomas Wedgwood of the Churchyard was born in 1714, and at no remote date afterwards the father died. Upon this event the younger Thomas Wedgwood removed from his small pot-work in the village to his father's tenement and works in the Churchyard, and here he continued his business in moulded white ware, in connection probably with the manufacture of mottled and black ware. He seems to have been a very skilful potter, and fertile in those suggestions and expedients which long practice and a considerable knowledge of an art confer; for at the distance of many years, we find the old workmen who had passed into the service of his great son, referring back to the

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Taylor also to lease the parcel of land called the Oldfield, now into two parts divided; and the meadow formerly enclosed out of the said Oldfield, which last-mentioned parcels of land were late in the holding of Thomas Taylor, deceased. To be held for a term of fifty years (if the said Catherine Egerton so long live), at an annual rent of sixteen pounds ten shillings. Signed by John Taylor and William Taylor, in the presence of John Thomason and John Henshall.

[1] Indenture of agreement made the 25th day of March 1755, between Catherine Egerton, of Burslem, widow, and William Shufflebottom, of Burslem, potter. The said W. Shufflebottom to lease a piece of land called the Lower Oxney Croft, and the patch taken out of the Lower Meadow. The said lessor reserving all mines and minerals of what nature and kind soever, and also all timber, trees, coppice-wood, and underwood; with likewise liberty for the said lessor to get off all coal, to carry any minerals gotten, or timber felled. To be held for the term of twenty-one years (if the said Catherine Egerton so long survive), at the annual rental of six pounds fifteen shillings. Signed by William Shufflebottom, in the presence of John Henshall and Sarah Marsh.—Mayer MSS.

methods or receipts of their former master.[1] But he was evidently a good-tempered, unambitious man. Like most of his relatives, his circumstances were easy; he had enough and to spare for the daily wants of his many children, and for more than this, it is likely he did not strive. Unlike Astbury and a few other of the master potters, who were alive to the rapidly increasing commercial prosperity of the country, and who were consequently pushing their trade far beyond the limited demands of the cratemen and hawkers, he probably in the intervals of labour followed his neighbours' example, and enjoyed his pipe and ale on his own settle; or adjourned to that of the 'Turk's Head' or 'Red Lion,' and there helped to discuss Walpole's Excise scheme, the duty on salt, the rumours of war or peace, King George's next Hanoverian expedition, when Sir Nigel Gresley or my Lord Gower might be expected in the neighbourhood, or the minor matters of local trade or domestic occurrences. Such was the man; acute, kindly, independent, patriotic; a type of the old race of Staffordshire potters, and of that class of men from whence came the inheritance of so much of the moral strength, and inventive and industrial ability, of the last and present centuries.

The dwelling occupied by Thomas Wedgwood, as by his father before him, was like the rest of the village houses, thatched and timbered; the interstices of the woodwork being filled in with mortar, the eaves deep, and the casements leaded. From what we have been able to gather, a narrow strip of garden divided the cottage from the lane, and so extended to the churchyard wall, and from this garden you entered at once, as was then universally the custom, into the roomy houseplace or

[1] Mayer MSS.

kitchen.[1] In this, in the gable next the pot-work, was the capacious chimney-place, where glowed the usual abundant fire of a coal country, whilst at the other end of the houseplace, nearest the church, was partitioned off a parlour or spare room kept for holiday occasions. The houseplace was, as usually the case, furnished in a substantial homely fashion. The ponderous settle beside the fire, the leather-covered easy chair, the shelved dresser, the clock, the tables; and hooked to the beams of the ceiling the great oak-made cratch for bacon. Behind the settle, the cratemen's scores were chalked, as may still be seen even in these days of the schoolmaster in the small outlying pot-works of Staffordshire and Shropshire; and on the dresser shelves were doubtless displayed such masterpieces of the potter's art as Thomas Wedgwood, or his father before him, had fashioned, or that were otherwise the gift of the various skilful cousins and uncles who excelled in the same art. Mingled with these were probably stray specimens of older pottery, when workmanship was rude and decoration barbarous in style, as the bowl, the tyg, and the posset-pot; as also, suspended in the most conspicuous place, some highly coloured

[1] This barbarous plan of construction is still prevalent in the midland counties, even in modern-built houses of more or less pretension; though opposed to all true principles of domestic architecture, in which regard is had to ventilation, warmth, cleanliness, and privacy. In our northern climate, protection against cold and damp can alone be effected by one or two outer chambers—as the porch and the passage—prior to entrance upon the living chamber. In relation to this point, it is curious to observe how little even men of high capacity and constructive ability can advance in practical usages beyond their age. Josiah Wedgwood, who in conjunction with Bramah, as we shall hereafter see, effected great improvements in one of the most important of our domestic conveniences, yet permitted the construction of his workmen's dwellings at Etruria upon this plan. They are well-built, the chief rooms are large, the windows ample — a point for consideration when the duty upon them was so high — and the brickwork of the ground floors still shows its excellence of glaze and colour. But almost all the houses open from the street at once into the principal room; an error in construction which Wedgwood would have been the last to permit had he lived in our own day.

Staffordshire plaque or dish of Thomas Toft, or Thomas Sans.

Behind this houseplace was the usual back-house where the family brewing, dairy-work, and washing were carried on. The oven was out-doors at the rear; and upstairs were the ordinary number of two or three bed-chambers, with testered and stump bedsteads, and large chests to hold the Sunday clothes.

In this dwelling, in which were already five or six children under ten years of age, and several older, was born, on a summer's day early in July 1730, Josiah Wedgwood, the youngest child of Thomas and Mary Wedgwood. The date of his birth is somewhat uncertain; but if it was the same as his baptism, July 12, 1730, O.S.,[1] he must have been carried at once from his mother's chamber to the neighbouring church and there baptized; a common enough instance at that period, if the child was at all delicate, and the church conveniently at hand.[2] He appears to have been the first of his race who bore the name of Josiah; his prolific generation having already pretty well exhausted the ordinary category of names derived from Scripture, as John, Thomas, Aaron, Abner, Samuel, Timothy, and Daniel; for it seems in those days to have been an invariable rule amongst the potters, both masters and workmen, to refer to the Bible for this purpose. It was a custom probably derived as much from a Catholic as a Puritanic age.

The birth of another child, in a household where there were already so many, could have excited no unusual degree of interest; though by that kindly law of Providence

[1] 'Josiah, son of Thomas and Mary Wedgwood, baptized July 12, 1730.' — Extract from the Parish Register of St. John's, Burslem.

[2] There exists the same doubt as to the exact date of Shakespeare's birth.

which rules in all such cases, we may be sure it was no unwelcome stranger, but dropped at once into its place, and took its share of parental care and tenderness, as though waited for and necessary to complete the integrity of the domestic scene. Neither did the curate and gossips, as they gathered round the font and hurried over their accustomed duty, imagine for one moment, we may be quite sure, how potential in the industrial history of their country was to be the name thus conferred; how associated with beauty of constructive form, ideal grace, and truth in its utilitarian as in its artistic sense; or that men, the greatest in their day, would be proud to associate it with theirs, in many of the civil ameliorations and industrial advances of the eighteenth century. In this way, and thus mutely and obscurely, does all true service make its beginning in this world of duty, sacrifice, and endeavour.

The childhood of Josiah Wedgwood was simply that of other country children. There were the adjacent fields, and strips of waste for playground, the cratemen's pack-horses to ride as they waited for their loads of ware, and relations innumerable to visit in the village. Occasionally Josiah and his little brothers and sisters may have been invited to the Overhouse, where its benevolent mistress Mrs. Egerton, and her old servant Sarah Marsh, welcomed them with little treats; for their father if he lived, if not their eldest brother Thomas, would succeed to a portion if not the whole of her property; and it was only natural that she should be kindly to those who were her heirs and nearest kin. Whilst age and health permitted, Mrs. Egerton was a regular attendant at the parish church, as she was also its patron; for in 1756, shortly prior to her death, she gave a house adjoining the 'Crown' inn for the curate's residence; though the gift, being void

under the Mortmain Act, was ultimately resumed by her heir-at-law. She also presented to the church the communion plate still in use, consisting of flagon, chalice, and paten, which bear inscriptions recording her donation.[1] We can thus well imagine her on summer Sundays stepping after service into her kinsman's dwelling to give pleasant greeting. Here, seated in houseplace or parlour, we can see her in her hoops, her furbelowed gown, her high-heeled shoes, and still higher headdress, tenderly exhorting the little ones gathered round her knee, whilst she held there the little Josiah, who was to grow up into so good and great a man.[2] How proud her motherly heart would have been, could she have glanced into the future, and drawn even the faintest picture of the manhood of this little child, or of the objects of grace and beauty his genius would fashion!

It is said that Wedgwood's mother was a small and delicately organised woman, of unusual quickness, sensibility, and kindness of heart. Though her husband occupied his seat in the parish church, and her children were baptized at its font, she seems to have strictly enforced, though without austerity, the gravity and moral discipline of the sect amongst which she had been bred. Her children were taught to value sobriety and industry, to observe merit in others, and to see that all their hopes of advancement in this life depended upon the daily exercise of self-restraint, integrity, and the due cultivation of those natural gifts with which nature has endowed the individual. The manhood of Josiah Wedgwood betrays an early influence of this superior kind, as well as others of a tender

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[1] Ward's History of Stoke-upon-Trent, p. 225.

[2] As infirmity crept on, she was probably wheeled to church in her 'chair,' or 'chaise,' as such is mentioned in her will.

character. It has been hitherto assumed that he was born in a mean hovel, surrounded by the rudest associations, and whilst yet a child consigned to the coarsest drudgery. The facts, as we thus find, were essentially different. His father, as we have seen, was a man in easy, if not in affluent circumstances. His relatives Aaron Wedgwood and Dr. Thomas Wedgwood junior, were persons of position in their native place. The latter was a man of the nicest skill in his art, and for those days extremely well educated. His handwriting is that of a gentleman. John and Thomas Wedgwood, the sons of Aaron, who commenced business in 1740, and in eighteen to twenty years from that date had acquired a fortune and built the handsomest house in Burslem, were, when Josiah Wedgwood was a child, active and intelligent young men, busy in improving their staple, and as keenly alive to the commercial needs, as to the intense spirit of industry then taking growth throughout the country. A few years later, when they had erected their conspicuous dwelling, and earned comparative leisure, their hospitable hearth became a gathering-place for men of keen and active intelligence. Here Brindley, Thomas Gilbert, the Duke of Bridgewater's agent, John and Hugh Henshall, father and son, met to discuss the various plans then afloat, for constructing and improving roads and flint mills, and the first surveys for canal navigation. Other of Josiah Wedgwood's relations held an equally influential position in their native place; and as to a simplicity of habits and manners, such prevailed everywhere. It is also certain, that the worthy and substantial class from which Wedgwood sprang were, generally speaking, as well educated as the greater portion of the gentry. A middle class, as we now regard it, had then hardly an existence. The widest line of demarcation existed between

those who had any occupation, and those whose chief business was to spend money. In position, the well-to-do classes of the towns and large villages were more on a par, socially and morally, with our superior working classes, than with the highly educated, aristocratic middle class of our own day. Yet omitting the social differences of the two periods, they must be regarded as one. As to the style of living and habits of business, both were equally simple. The manufacturers, tradesmen, and farmers associated with their apprentices and servants on almost an equal footing; and the ways of business, and the places in which it was carried on, would surprise our generation. The various trades were less divided than at present, and in the provincial towns, as those of Shrewsbury, Stafford, and Newcastle-under-Lyme, many of the shops were yet unglazed; the goods being exposed to the gaze of passers-by on open baulks or shutters, which, swung on hinges, were turned back and secured at night.[1]

Thus, if we regard Wedgwood's extraordinary natural capacity, for the art to which he devoted his life, as the culminating point of the talent and ability of his father and grandfather directed to the same pursuit, and that the suavity and self-possession which characterised him were derived from a long line of ancestors who had passed their lives under the influence of manly occupations and easy circumstances; we may be equally certain, that much else which was so striking in his noble, self-

[1] A few of this ancient class of shops existed in Shrewsbury till as recently as 1823. There was one in Mardol belonging to a hatter, which was probably in the same condition as it had been in the reign of Henry VII. or Henry VIII. It was low and dark, and its floor was paved with common tiles. The doorway was formed of massive beams of oak, and on each side of it dangled otter and other skins. The baulks were also of oak, dark from age and use. On these the hats were exposed, their only protection in damp or wet weather being a sheet of oilskin. Shops of the same primitive character were also to be seen in the Staffordshire towns early in the present century.

reliant nature, was derived from the surrounding circumstances of his early youth. The affection he displayed in after life to several of his brothers and sisters points to their tenderest association in childhood. He was attached to his eldest brother Thomas, in spite of a great difference in their character, and particularly so to his brother John; to his sisters Margaret Byerley and Catherine Willet he was the truest friend; and we shall find him in after years sending succour, by the tender hand of Dr. Priestley, to his brother Richard, who, unprosperous in some shape or another, had settled at Scarborough. The home in which Josiah Wedgwood was reared was also one of plenty. Connected with it was none of that debasing poverty, which more or less so generates selfishness, crushes the kindlier emotions, and too often stultifies what is self-reliant in the character; whilst there was just that amount of need which teaches the necessity of earnest endeavour and continuous labour, if the nobler aspirations of our being would be realised.

The Free School of Burslem was not erected till 1749, but the little town had its dame-school. Here the potters' children were sent, more to be out of the way of mischief, than for the learning to be obtained there. Josiah accompanied his brothers and sisters; and later, when he was about seven years old and could walk the distance, the little group, of which he was the youngest, went daily across the pleasant fields of Wolstanton to Newcastle to a school kept by a man of superior education named John or Thomas Blunt, who occupied a large and very old half-timbered house in the market-place. Of this a part of the ground, as also the first floors, were used as school-rooms, the school being a mixed one. The girls were taught knitting and sewing

by Mrs. Blunt; and reading, writing, and arithmetic by her husband.[1]

At this period the worthy schoolmaster must have

(Fig. 54.) MARKET-PLACE, NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME.

been a man past middle life. His attainments were above the average of men in his position, for besides some classical knowledge, he was acquainted with mathematics; he studied and made experiments in chemistry, taught writing and arithmetic in an admirable manner, was a

[1] A grandson of this John or Thomas Blunt taught in after years a younger branch of the Wedgwoods of Maer. Another grandson settled in Shrewsbury as a wholesale and retail chemist and druggist. Here he passed along life; being highly respected for his skill in business, his benevolence, and estimable character. The writer well remembers him as a man of superior and venerable aspect, who always dressed in a quaint suit of black, knee-breeches and gaiters, whilst his thin grey hair was drawn together in a queue behind. He had a keen memory of Mr. Wedgwood, and held his character in high veneration.

strict disciplinarian, tall in appearance, ascetic in countenance, and in demeanour reverend and grave. It was said that his family had been Puritans, and, enrolled amongst Cromwell's Ironsides, had done good service, to the state in the civil wars. From this source Blunt probably derived his religious, grave, and meditative character.

In the same school as young Josiah were many of his future contemporaries, as the Mayers of Newcastle, the Henshalls, the Taylors of Burslem, the Booths, the Daniels, and others. Sprightly and yet grave, the little Josiah was a general favourite. Among his companions, he was distinguished for uncommon vivacity and humour. They were attached to him by his warm and generous temper; and his reputed sagacity marked him out as a leader in their boyish sports. It is handed down that he thus early betrayed his extraordinary eye for construction by his use of the scissors. Borrowing a pair from his sisters or the other girls, and with paper torn from a copybook, or brought by the lads for the purpose, he would cut out the most surprising things; as an army at combat, a fleet at sea, a house and garden, or a whole pot-work, and the shapes of the ware made in it. These cuttings when wetted were stuck the whole length of the sloping desks, to the exquisite delight of the scholars, but often to the great wrath of the severe pedagogue.

The daily journey of about seven miles, there and back, between Burslem and Newcastle, though toilsome enough in winter, when the fields were trackless from snow, and the lanes all but impassable, must have been most pleasant in the long days of summer. The old maps show that these paths leading to Newcastle stretched away from Thomas Wedgwood's works, through pastures,

corn-fields, and short tracts of moorland waste; bright in spring with the golden buds of gorse and broom, and in autumn purple with heather, or russet with fern. We may be quite certain that these harmonies and beauties of nature were not lost upon the observant child, whose eye even then may have learnt to love those tints, which in after years were such favourites with him in decoration—such as the harmonious commingling of blues and greens, ruddy and russet colours with dark greens, and yellows with paler greens. It is also most remarkable to observe, in the patterns designed at his suggestion and used by his enamellers in the decoration of useful ware, that the flowers, leaves, and berries common in our English hedgerows were predominant favourites; such as the strawberry, the convolvulus (generally coloured blue after garden specimens), the honeysuckle, the holly-berry, ivy, and various tinted leaves.

At home Josiah was a favourite; with his little sisters especially. Like other children they kept birds, rabbits, and similar pets; and it is handed down, that some shelves in one of his father's working sheds were turned into a sort of museum, being decorated with fossil shells and other curiosities, which the men who attended the coal-laden pack-horses from Sneyd and Norton Green brought from the mines there.[1] It is a remarkable fact in connection with this tradition, that many of Wedgwood's

[1] The writer's father had this curious little fact related to him many years ago by a very aged lady of the name of Shrafnell, whose father had been a Birmingham japanner, and a near neighbour of Burley, one of the mounters subsequently employed by Wedgwood to set his cameos. At the time the latter was making his various great improvements and discoveries in pottery, many stories of his early days were afloat; and the materials he employed were alike the subject of curiosity and grave speculation. This old lady, who possessed a good deal of Wedgwood's ware and many curious articles of early japan work, died nearly forty years ago at the great age of ninety or more.

best forms were derived from natural objects; particularly from shells. In middle life he studied fossils scientifically;[1] he bought a collection of shells, and attended sales where specimens of more than common beauty were likely to be seen.[2] He encouraged this objective taste in his own children, of which we shall have a charming instance by and by.[3] It is told that on one occasion when a boy about twelve, some labourers whilst digging in a field near Newcastle came, as often happened, upon various fragments of pseudo-Samian ware, of which a fragment reached his hands. He was so delighted with its colour, glaze, and impressed ornaments, that he carried it home, and carefully preserved it on his mother's dresser shelves. At an earlier date, he took pleasure in contrasting the colours of her patchwork; thus proving how soon came into use the powers of his artistic eye for colour, and his classic taste for form.

[1] Mayer MSS. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

BLACK MEDALLION.—MAYER COLLECTION.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

THE STEADY IMPROVEMENT OF TRADE FROM 1730 TO 1740—THE DEATH OF JOSIAH WEDGWOOD'S FATHER—THE BOY'S FIRST WORK AT THE THROWER'S BENCH — THE SMALL-POX — THE FIRST SYMPTOMS OF A DISORDER IN HIS RIGHT LEG—HIS APPRENTICESHIP—OBLIGED TO GIVE UP THROWING—HIS LEG HAS TO REST ON A STOOL DURING WORKING HOURS—THE REBELLION OF 1745—YOUNG WEDGWOOD'S EARLY WORK—HIS FIRST TEA-POT—BEAUTY OF MANY OF THE ARTICLES MADE BY HIS HAND—FIRST ATTEMPTS TO IMPROVE THE CREAM-COLOURED WARE—CLOSE OF APPRENTICESHIP—WISHES TO BECOME HIS BROTHER'S PARTNER, BUT IS REFUSED—ENTERS INTO BUSINESS WITH JOHN HARRISON OF NEWCASTLE, AND THOMAS ALDERS OF STOKE—CUPIDITY OF THESE MEN—YOUNG WEDGWOOD'S LODGING AT STOKE—WITHDRAWS FROM HIS FIRST PARTNERSHIP, AND ENTERS UPON A FRESH ONE WITH THOMAS WHEILDON, OF FENTON—HIS ARDUOUS PREPARATIVE LABOURS—GREEN GLAZE—BIRMINGHAM THE GREAT CENTRE OF TRADE—INJURES HIS LEG—A LENGTHENED ILLNESS FOLLOWS—LONG CONFINED TO HIS ROOM—FOLLOWS OUT A PERSISTENT SYSTEM OF SELF-CULTURE—NECESSITATED TO CONFIDE MANY OF THE SECRET PROCESSES OF HIS ART TO WHEILDON'S WORKMEN—DISSOLUTION OF PARTNERSHIP—RETURNS TO BURSLEM, AND HIRES A SMALL POT-WORK FROM HIS DISTANT COUSINS JOHN AND THOMAS WEDGWOOD.

CHAPTER VI.

WEDGWOOD'S START IN LIFE.

DURING the first nine years of Wedgwood's life, the country was at peace; and Staffordshire, like the rest of the midland and northern districts, shared in the slow but steady increase of manufacturing industry. The population of the district now comprised within the limits of the borough of Stoke-upon-Trent, which in 1730 did not amount to 4,000 persons, nearly doubled itself in a little more than thirty years; and we have thus a proof that the intervening period was one of general activity and social improvement. Money was plentiful; the price of land rose gradually from twenty-one to twenty-seven years' purchase; and notwithstanding the still low condition of agricultural knowledge—in the midland counties, especially—Staffordshire could show improvement in tillage and enclosure, and more particularly in working its mineral treasures. The general well-being of the people was marked by the increasing consumption of exciseable articles. The home consumption of tea, which in 1730 was 1,380,199 lbs., had risen to 2,209,183 lbs. in 1745. One of the greatest fiscal grievances of the period was the duty on salt, which Walpole, in order, as it is said, to propitiate the country party, reimposed in 1732, after its abolition two

years previously, as a tax obnoxious to the home comforts of the people, and to many of their industrial processes. The revival of this impost fell heavily upon the manufacturers of earthenware, and was justly considered a great grievance by the Staffordshire potters, whose profits it curtailed, although it does not seem to have lessened, even temporarily, the increasing amount of ware they turned out weekly from their works.[1] Meetings were held in Burslem, Stoke, Newcastle, and Stafford, to consider the evils of this tax; and petitions were forwarded to Parliament, but without other result than to increase public excitement on the whole question of the excise laws. Yet the evil had its antidote. The salt glaze was in itself very imperfect, and but an indifferent vehicle in relation to enamelling; and therefore when the cost of production fell back to its old standard, new processes were resorted to, and fluid glazes brought rapidly into use. Their discovery, or what perhaps would be a better term, their first employment—for Astbury had supplied the easy clue to fluid glazes by his wash or dip of mingled flint and clay—is due, in the first instance, to Aaron Wedgwood, born in 1717, son of Aaron Wedgwood, the eldest brother of John and Thomas Wedgwood, of the Big House. In fact, the vast industrial movement of the age, and the processes connected therewith, were too potential in themselves, to be greatly hindered by the gross economical mistakes and party venality of legislators. Since the liberties of the nation had been settled on a firmer basis by the Revolution and the accession of the House of Hanover, this vitality was to be observed in everything connected with the industrial progress and

[1] The amount of duty paid on salt by the manufacturers of Burslem and its neighbourhood amounted in 1762 to near 5,000*l.* annually.

well-being of the people. In the increase of towns and villages, in the growth of population; and even more in the manufactures of woollen, silk, linen, brass, iron, tin, paper, tapes, threads, and smaller things, than in earthenware itself, great as this was.[1]

On June 26 or 27, 1739, Josiah Wedgwood had the misfortune to lose his father after a brief illness of what was probably fever. He was buried on the 30th of the same month, in the adjacent churchyard.[2] His will, dated June 26—which is still extant, and seemingly the hurried product of the dying bed—was drawn out on half a sheet of post paper, and attested by his two brothers-in-law, Moses Marsh and Samuel Astbury, both of whom were potters.[3] It takes tender care of his wife, insures to her her marriage settlement, and all household goods. His eldest son, Thomas, is to enter in upon the possession of the estate, but out of it is to come means of support for his six youngest children, Margaret, John, Aaron, Richard, Catherine, and Josiah; and 20*l.* each is to be paid to them on their reaching twenty years of age. An eldest daughter, Ann, is sternly prohibited from any participation in the benefit of her father's estate; and we may thus conclude that she had in some way offended him, and that there was no forgiveness for her on the dying bed.

The estate and business thus passed to the eldest son, and a few years later he came into the possession of the largest part of Mrs. Egerton's property; yet, strange to say, two at least of the legacies in his father's will were left unpaid till 1776, four years after his own death. Josiah

[1] Gentleman's Magazine, vol. ix. pp. 47, 479.
[2] Register, St. John's, Burslem.
[3] Registry of the Diocese of Lichfield.

Wedgwood, as his brother's executor, then stepped in, and paid his sisters, Margaret Byerley and Catherine Willet, their small legacies; an act of justice to his father's memory, only too long delayed.[1]

The little patrimony thus burdened with the support of the widow and her large family, with the wife and subsequent children of the heir-at-law—for he married two years after his father's death—and probably with other contingencies of which we, at this date, can possibly know nothing, necessitated retrenchment in expenses, and methods by which the general income might be increased. Accordingly Josiah was taken at this date from school, though not before Thomas Blunt had made him, as he did the rest of the lads he taught, a fair arithmetician, and, in writing, master of a capital hand. As type of the man, Josiah Wedgwood always wrote a fine distinct bold hand, which was even elegant when he wrote leisurely; an event not common in so busy a life.

Even in case his father had survived to a later period, it seems probable that Josiah Wedgwood would not have remained much longer at school, as it was then customary to place boys apprentice at an early age to almost every trade, more especially to that of a potter; as, if throwing were to be one of the branches taught, it necessitated that the learner should be very young, in order that the touch should be trained to an exquisite delicacy, and the muscles of the wrists so formed and strengthened as to insure altogether the utmost manipulative skill. This was beginning, in his own strong phrase, 'at the lowest round of the ladder.' With such an exquisite eye for proportion as he possessed, his skill in throwing or form-

[1] Receipts of payment by Margaret Byerley and Catherine Willet. Mayer MSS.

ing the vessel upon the potter's wheel soon became extraordinary, and rivalled that of the best workmen in the neighbourhood. Though subsequently disused, as we shall see, he always retained his marvellous skill in this direction; so that at the distance of forty years he could still give a practical example to his throwers, and by merely poising a newly-thrown vessel in his left hand, he would tell at a glance its defects or beauties. If it failed even minutely in its geometrical proportions, he would, before his leg was taken off, break it up with the stick which he then always carried, remarking as he did so, 'This won't do for Josiah Wedgwood.'[1]

A boy who had lived always in the neighbourhood of pot-works, and in daily association with those whose business lay with potting, and whose general talk was about little else, must have taken to the trade far more readily than one who might come newly to it. Accordingly we find that he could soon throw sufficiently well to take an active part in that department of his brother's works; and Shaw records that 'Josiah and his brother Richard sat at work at the respective corners of a small room.' It seems strange that we hear nothing of an apprenticeship at this period, though the rule was an invariable one; and must, if the boy were really intended for a potter, be a point absolutely certain, even if, from circumstances which have not reached our time, it was temporarily delayed.

He was thus approaching his twelfth year, when the

[1] This interesting anecdote, so illustrative of Wedgwood's character and daily habits, was related to Mr. Mayer by one of the best throwers ever employed at Etruria. It had been this man's glory in his prime, as it was his pride in his old age, to tell that he had thrown some of the finest vases which had issued from the ornamental works at Etruria. The larger vases were necessarily formed by pressing. We shall see more of this in its due place.

small-pox, in an unusually virulent form, broke out in Burslem, and the children in the cottages of Cross Hill Lane and the churchyard escaped no better than the rest. The weekly average of funerals was greatly increased; and the festering heaps which already encumbered the small spot of moorland graveyard grew larger and larger. To this latter circumstance it was probably owing, though unconsidered at that period, that the disease which entered Thomas Wedgwood's dwelling was of the most malignant type.[1] Several of the children were stricken down. They all lay very ill, Josiah more than the rest, as the small-pox in him took a confluent form, covering him from head to foot, and leaving him, when absolute danger was past, in a state of deplorable weakness. During the worst stage of the disease, his right knee became affected, and caused a great amount of suffering; and when after many weeks he rose from his bed, and tried to walk, he found he was unable from a stiffness and deadness in the limb. For a time he used crutches, but these were thrown aside as health and strength slowly returned; though even then he found that his limb was no longer of the same use to him as previous to his illness. It has been stated that these effects of the small-pox were neglected, but of this there is no evidence. His tender mother was his nurse; his sisters were exceedingly fond of him; his aunts in the village, Mrs. Marsh, Mrs. Astbury, and other female relatives, were good motherly women, who from all accounts took interest in the potter's orphan children; and there was certainly no want of means to secure medical attendance. But the disorders which are contingent to, and too often

[1] The churchyard was enlarged in 1802; but long before this period it had become very inadequate to the wants of the parish.

follow, the typhoid and infectious classes of disease are even yet a problem, both as to treatment and relative effects; and this must have been much more the case at a period when doctors knew so little of the art they practised. Systematic medical training was then unknown; and except in London and one or two of the great towns, where Mead, Taylor, and a few more, had traced to its logical consequences medicine in relation to disease, the doctors were at best but a race of empirical old women, whose remedies were divided between the basin and lancet of their predecessors the barbers and the nostrums of the quacks. There was a doctor at that date in Burslem named Mawson, and others at Newcastle, who, for what we know, may have been comparatively skilful men; but even presuming that they could treat this dread disease with any reasonable degree of skill, their advice and remedies were very rarely seconded by any intelligent agency on the part of those who had summoned them; but, practically confided to some wise woman of the town or village, were sure to be superseded by absurd nostrums and occult legerdemain. Even in London, and in the midst of the best medical advice of the time, the annual death-rate from this disease was truly appalling in its amount; and the letters and memoirs of the period show us only too well that, when the type was a malignant one, recovery rarely followed. Indeed, small-pox and fever were regarded as such inevitable visitants to every household as to lead to a sort of fatalism. If the disease was left to nature, which happily for the patient it sometimes was, there was a chance of recovery, but very little if the remedies then popular were resorted to.

As soon as the boy had recovered, his apprenticeship

was decided on. Accordingly upon November 11, 1744, when he was rather more than fourteen years old, his Indenture[1] was drawn up, signed, and witnessed as follows, by himself, his mother, his eldest brother, and his two paternal uncles, Samuel Astbury and Abner Wedgwood.

This document is valuable on more accounts than one. The induction may be drawn from it that there had been a prior amount of service and instruction in the art, considered in value equivalent to two years, as the general term of apprenticeship was seven years. It shows also that no physical disability then existed, or was even surmised, which would prevent the art of throwing from being included amongst the other branches to be taught. It

[1] THIS INDENTURE made the Eleventh day of November in the Seventeenth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Second by the grace of God King of great Brittain and so forth and in the Year of our Lord one Thousand seven Hundred forty and four Between Josiah Wedgwood son of Mary Wedgwood of the Churchyard in the County of Stafford of the one part and Thomas Wedgwood of the Churchyard in the County of Stafford Potter of the other part WITNESSETH that the said Josiah Wedgwood of his own freewill and Consent to and with the Consent and Direction of his said Mother HATH seat and doth herby Bind himself Apprentice unto the said Thomas Wedgwood to Learn his Art Mistery Occupation or Imployment of Thrower and Handleing which he the said Thomas Wedgwood now useth and with him as an Apprentice to dwell continue and serve from the day of the Date hereof unto the full end and term of five-Years from thence Next Ensuing and fully to be Compleat and ended: DURING which said Term the said Apprentice do his said Masters will and faithfully shall serve, his secrits keep, his Lawfull Commands Every were gladly do: Hurt to his said Master he shall not do or willfully suffer to be done by others, but the same to his Power shall let or forthwith give Notice thereof to his said Master, the goods of his said Master he shall not imbezil or waste, nor them Lend, without his Consent to any, at Cards Dice or any other unlawfull Gamees he shall not Play, Taverns or Ale Houses he shall not haunt or frequent, Fornication he shall not Commit—Matrimony he shall not Contract—from the service of his said Master he shall not at any time depart or absent himself without his said Masters Leave; but in all things as a good and faithfull Apprentice shall and Will Demean and behave himselfe towards his said Master and all his, During the said Term, and the said Master do learn his Apprentice the said Art of Throwing and Handleing which he now useth with all things thereunto shall and will Teach and Instruct or Cause to be well and sufficiently Taught and Instructed after the best way and manner he can, and shall and will also find and Allow unto the said Apprentice Meat Drink Washing and Lodging and

likewise proves that amongst his family connections were those who had a truer and higher idea of moral life, and of the self-restraints necessary to the young, than were common at that day. The wording of the Indenture was after a received pattern, although it was customary to omit or add at will certain clauses. The retention of the following clause in this case is, however, significant:[1]—'Cards, dice, or any other unlawful games he shall not play; taverns or ale-houses he shall not haunt or frequent; fornication he shall not commit; matrimony

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Apparell of all Kinds both Linen and Woollen and all other Necessaries, both in Sickness and in Health, Meat and Convenient for such an Apprentice During the Term aforesaid, and for the true performance of all and Every the said Covenants and Agreement either of the said Parties Bindeth himselfe unto Each other by these presents in Wittness wereof they have Interchanged and set their hands and seals the Day and Year as before Mentioned.

Sealed and Delivered in the Presence of

Samuel Astbury
Abner Wedgwood

Josiah Wedgwood

Mary Wedgwood

Thos Wedgwood

(Fig. 55.) FACSIMILE OF SIGNATURES TO INDENTURES.

[1] The wording of Benjamin Franklin's Indenture of Apprenticeship is very similar; although one of the clauses, bearing most strongly on the morals of the future apprentice, is absent. Parton's Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin, vol. i. p. 53.

he shall not contract.' It shows distinctly that most worthy influences were in operation around the boy. His after life proves this. For whatever was the perfection, in some respects, of his physical and consequently his mental and moral heritage, something was certainly due to training and example. He had undoubtedly a simple, peaceful home, in which, if there was no luxury, there was no poverty or vice. Most of those who were allied to him had happily to work for their daily bread; there was the necessity for, and the practice of, frugality and industry; and the influences around him were altogether of that homely, practical, and earnest description which have moulded the character of some of our greatest men. It is not improbable that the Indenture was drawn up under the direction of his mother and Mrs. Egerton. As we have seen, both were women who set their face rigidly against the vice of lewdness and drunkenness then so prevalent; and, maybe, the clause itself just lifts the veil, and no more, of old family sorrows and shortcomings, suffered for, mourned for, in reverence to be guarded against through, the youth of a newer generation, but otherwise tenderly buried in the graves of those who had so sinned.

A year after Josiah Wedgwood had thus commenced his apprenticeship, the Scotch Rebellion broke out, and the intense excitement which prevailed throughout northern Staffordshire must have left a strong impression on his boyish mind. Some few persons buried their money and more precious commodities, and some of the farmers hid away their cattle and rolling stock amidst the broom and gorse which lay nearest their dwellings;[1] but otherwise

[1] Shaw's History of Staffordshire Potteries, p. 189.

the general feeling seems to have been one of quiet contempt for the invaders, joined to a spirited desire to aid the authorities of the Crown. Upon the Duke of Cumberland removing his army from Newcastle to Stone, where it lay encamped in what was then known as the Town Field, a regiment of Marcar's dragoons was quartered at Shelton, as a protection to that and the surrounding villages.[1] Hither, as also to Stone, the population flocked, to see the unwonted sight, in that peaceful industrial district, of soldiers and their artillery; and we can well fancy that the young apprentice and his brothers did not stay behind at such a season of general excitement. Perhaps here it was that Richard Wedgwood, then a youth of twenty, first imbibed his taste for a calling which led him away from home and the occupation to which he had been reared.

This spirit of resistance animated every rank; and the landowners, as much as the potters and those they employed, were, if necessary, ready to a man to rise and defend their hearths. One country squire, named Mainwaring, living at Whitmore near Trentham, is said to have taken prisoners a hundred Highlanders, and killed thirty more; and the stragglers from Lord George Murray's army, as he passed through Leek and Ashbourn on his way to Derby, were in many places ruthlessly dealt with; and others, it is said, died from cold and hunger amidst the swamps and wastes of the moorlands, for it was December and the winter had set in: not even a peasant—such was the hostile feeling—would afford these unhappy wretches the shelter of his roof.

The vanguard of the Pretender's army descended as far south as Talk-on-the-Hill and Bagnall. On its route it

[1] Ward's History of Stoke-upon-Trent, p. 356.

took some of the clergy prisoners for a few hours; and at the former place the troops stole a farmer's horses and drank out his ale. At Bagnall the Pretender and his officers stayed uninvited to breakfast at a Justice Murhall's house; and afterwards compelled the old man to ride with them and point out the road to Derby.[1] He was detained two or three days, and then dismissed upon payment of 300*l.*:[2] meanwhile his house had been plundered of money and fire-arms; and for this he took infamous vengeance. According to one account, he caught a wretched Highlander, and after hanging him upon a sign-post at Leek, he had his body flayed, and the skin sent to be tanned for a drumhead;[3] according to another version, the man had been left sick at Bagnall by his comrades, and the Justice had him skinned, though it is to be hoped not before he was dead.[4] The main facts of this story are undoubtedly correct, and they were horribly avenged a few days after. On Lord George Murray's retreat from Derby to avoid encountering the Duke of Cumberland's army on Stone Field, a detachment of horse met the Justice riding on the road from Biddulph to Congleton. They seized and so disgustingly maltreated him, that thenceforth he was never known to enjoy a comfortable day, though he survived till January 1762.[5]

These occurrences, and the general tone of public feeling at this period in northern Staffordshire, would have doubtless been repeated in other parts of the country had the Rebellion extended further south. There existed a certain amount of apathy, arising partly from a surety that there was little real danger, and partly from

[1] Ward's History of Stoke-upon-Trent, p. 230.
[2] Ibid. p. 356.
[3] Ibid. p. 230.
[4] Shaw's History of Staffordshire Potteries, p. 136.
[5] Ward's History of Stoke-upon-Trent, 531; Shaw's History of Staffordshire Potteries, p. 136.

the dissensions which had been caused by the Reimposition of the Salt Duty, and by the Excise laws generally speaking. A feeling was also prevalent that the country was in some sense misgoverned, and that the administration as well as many public men were alike factious and feeble; but at heart all was really sound. Trade was flourishing, the condition of the people improving in all respects; and the Staffordshire potters knew as well as the rest of the trading community that they lived under equal laws, and that their new race of kings, in spite of their Hanoverian predilections, were far worthier than the race they had supplanted. They had the consciousness of brave men that their hearths were safe, even at the instance of the Government they were inclined to despise; the rest, such as the small exploits of war, they left to country squires and justices of the peace, and were content to lose not an hour from the furtherance of that vast trade which they were keen enough to see was opening to them with what were then called the American Plantations.

There can be no doubt that, soon after Josiah Wedgwood's apprenticeship began, his brother very largely increased his manufacture of white lead-glazed ware. Judging from the large stock of moulds in hand at a subsequent date, much of this was moulded, as Thomas Wedgwood manufactured plates on a large scale, and this chiefly for exportation.[1] Much work was, however, necessarily left to the throwers, who produced tea and coffee cups, basins, ordinary jugs, globular teapots, circular terrines,[2] and other articles; and to this important branch

[1] Inventory of the stock of ware belonging to the late Thomas Wedgwood, of the Overhouse, taken in 1773. Mayer MSS.

[2] The old term for tureen. It was the one preferred and always used by Josiah Wedgwood. See Appendix to one of the later Catalogues, p. 148.

of his art the young apprentice seems diligently to have applied himself. But not for long. The pain and stiffness in his right knee returned; doctors were consulted, remedies applied, and rest taken, but without avail; and finally, when between fifteen and sixteen, he had to abandon the thrower's bench altogether, and to sit whilst at work with his leg extended before him upon a stool. Its amputation at this period is a mere myth. For twenty-two years further he bore patiently with his great infirmity, suffering much pain, often laid by for days and weeks together; and when at last he calmly decided to undergo amputation, it was not from any selfish motive of personal ease, but to render himself more efficient for the due performance of those great duties which genius and industry had already made preeminently his. This fortitude and determination of the strong-willed man are strikingly characteristic; and the facts as we shall hereafter state them from the documents themselves will be found most interesting.

This necessity to leave the thrower's bench, and turn his attention to other branches of his trade, led to the most important consequences. Had he remained stationary there during the larger portion of his apprenticeship, he would not have obtained that grasp of details, and that practical knowledge, which gave him subsequently such a mastery in his art. With the skill already acquired in throwing, joined to a perfection of vision which ensured to him at a glance the accuracy or inaccuracy of geometrical proportions, he was master of enough in this direction, of which the limits may be said to be stationary; and he was left free not only to pursue discoveries in the channels where they were likely to be made, but to turn his attention towards the improvement of

minor points of detail. This may be said to have been the turning point in his great career; the true beginning, environed as it seemed at the moment with the sad shadows of physical disability and disappointed hopes.

The remainder of his apprenticeship, from his sixteenth to his nineteenth year, embraced that critical passage from youth to early manhood, when the mental and the moral characteristics so strongly indicate themselves. And in this case they were of the highest kind: no tavern-hunting, no brawling, no vice of other kinds, but a steady attention to the duties before him, and a determinate self-culture. The exordium in the quaintly-worded indenture was no mere dead letter; it was vital, and bore as noble fruit as his worthy mother could desire. Probably, at the time, this augmentation of his early infirmity was looked upon as a great misfortune by himself and his friends. It cut him off, as perhaps they thought, from an active career, whilst in reality it involved the whole measure of a philosophic and ideal conception of the potter's art,—a blending of utility and beauty, which, reproducing the truth and grace of the classic ages, showed that such are eternal in principle, and need only the spirit of genius to again and again evoke them, under formulas and constructions adapted to a newer age. The new, in this case, and the old are one. Judging from what we may call the physiology of mental evolutions, it is probable that the young man suffered, in this passage of his life, from the depressions and conflicts with self, which all those who aspire to do their work after the highest type to be conceived of it, only know too well: those sinkings of the heart at shortcomings, those moments when the battle seems too long and too

weary; those periods of deep self-humiliation, when the result of our toil is so poor in fulfilment, and falls so immeasurably short of our ideal. Happy for us is it, and the cause of truth we serve, let the formula be what it may, if, like the young man Josiah Wedgwood, we begin the conflict anew; for the next step is still stronger, and involves a nearer approach to our ideal. This humility of spirit is a primary element of progress; for the conception of our ignorance includes the desire to learn; and Josiah Wedgwood must have passed through these necessary throes of self-culture, though the equable character of his mind, and his naturally cheerful temper, may have made these conflicts but little to be observed by those around him.

From the thrower's bench his attention seems to have been turned to the moulder's board; and to this period probably belongs the specimen known as 'Josiah Wedgwood's first teapot,' still reverently preserved at Etruria. The woodcut is taken from the original. It is formed from the common ochreous clay of the district; and has been pressed, as may be observed, in a mould of a style then common enough, and which belonged more properly to the branch of metallic art. It is oval in its general outline, but the form has few pretensions to grace. The body betokens care in preparation, as also a nicety of manipulation in the coloured leaves which twine round it; and the handle, though after the pattern of what were

(Fig. 56.) JOSIAH WEDGWOOD'S FIRST TEAPOT.

then called 'crabstock,' shows the guidance of a correct, if yet partially cultivated taste.

To this period we may also assign his earliest attempts in respect to that more ornamental class of small wares in the manufacture of which his relative Dr. Thomas Wedgwood had so excelled. This brought him into the track of experiment and analysis; for though the different clays and metallic oxides necessary to the imitation of agate, marble, melon, tortoiseshell, and other natural bodies, were well known in all the best potworks of the time, his mind was far too original to rest satisfied, even at this early date, in simply following in the mere path of other men's discoveries. By repeated trials, he succeeded in varying the agate ware into an excellent imitation of porphyry—an effect previously attempted, but never so successfully. With these two bodies he made knife-hafts and snuffboxes for the cutlers and hardwaremen of Sheffield and Birmingham; and for the disposal of these, it is said, he paid his first visit to the latter place in 1748, being then in his eighteenth year. For pickle-leaves, small dishes for confections, and other *hors-d'œuvres* as they were then styled, he sought assistance from the best mould-makers; and with the care thus bestowed, and the usual glaze of lead ore and flint, the results were often admirable.

In all the general details of a manufactory, a considerable improvement was at this period to be observed, though system and accuracy were yet greatly needed. Of any effectual organisation of labour or of processes there was yet very little; and as to the adjustment of quantitative proportion, superficies, and depth to the effects needed, though in a far less empirical state than in those days when the old race of potters made propor-

tional addition by the rudest guesswork, there was room for great improvement. In Thomas Wedgwood's works this was now to be observed. The young apprentice's eye for accuracy in detail, and his strong sense of order, were not to be repressed. Thus, in the mixing of materials, in the preparation of glaze, in the weighing of clay at the ballers' scales, and in the thickness of the bats for plates, dishes, and other moulded articles, more accuracy was enforced. The result was thus obtained of more absolute certainty in the constituent parts of similar bodies, of a greater lightness in the ware, and of positive accuracy in articles which were to resemble each other. These were all in after years distinguishing marks of the ware issued from the works at Etruria, though of course in a far higher degree. The majority of the articles in cream colour ware are still to be distinguished by a lightness which rival *pâte tendre*, or even oriental porcelain; and plates of the same size are ordinarily so accurate, compared one with each other, as to never vary the thousandth part of an inch in linear direction, or in entire superficies, or in proportional weight.

Towards the close of his apprenticeship, young Wedgwood seems to have turned his attention to the improvement of the ordinary cream ware, which was now manufactured in considerable quantities by the Warburtons of Hot Lane and others. But Thomas Wedgwood was, like his father before him, a kindly-hearted, unambitious man, who, having a tolerable export trade in ordinary white ware, and some home trade amongst the cratemen, was disinclined to leave the beaten track he had so long pursued. He had acquired property by his first wife, and he was the probable heir to the Overhouse estate; he had therefore no personal necessity to urge him onwards.

He had not the least sympathy with his young brother's ardent love for their joint art, but, on the contrary, was constantly reproving him for giving way to what he considered an idle and unprofitable curiosity in making experiments and trying new processes, and earnestly counselled him not to risk his future prosperity by indulging his imagination in forming new schemes and endless illusive projects.

Undaunted by these reiterated homilies of self-satisfied ignorance, young Wedgwood, upon the close of his apprenticeship, proposed to become his brother's partner, and as such push on their trade, as well as introduce many necessary reforms in their manufacturing processes and working establishment. But Thomas Wedgwood would not consent: he was wedded to his own methods of business, and dreaded perhaps the diminution of his own authority were his brother's active spirit of industry and superior intellect suffered to gain the ascendant. Thus driven from his home, young Wedgwood accepted the overtures of John Harrison, a tradesman of Newcastle-under-Lyne, who had invested money in a potwork at Cliff Bank, near Stoke, belonging to a potter named Thomas Alders.[1] Harrison himself knew little if anything of potting, but he wished to make the most of his investment; and as Thomas Alders was no great master of his art, they agreed to take young Wedgwood as partner, when it was learnt that he was about to leave the Churchyard Works. The wares made at Cliff Bank Pottery at this date were mottled, cloudy, and tortoise-shell, glazed with lead ore or salt; and shining black, of very good quality. Alders also manufactured tea-services,

[1] Shaw's History of the Staffordshire Potteries. Mr. Mayer's copy with Shaw's MS. additions, p. 162.

jugs, and other articles, in what was then styled 'blue scratched' ware. This was an ordinary white body scratched with a sharp nail by women, called 'flowerers,' who, when they had incised by faint lines flowers that had no likeness in nature, or grotesque imitations of Chinese pagodas and umbrella-covered mandarins, dusted in the pattern with ground zaffre.

Accordingly, some time early in the year 1751 or 1752, the young man took upon himself the management of Alders's pot-work, at probably a very low salary, judging it by the sums then paid to modellers and other high-class workmen by the master-potters, or to men like Brindley for engineering work of a most complicated kind. But it was soon seen that a master-hand had come amongst them. Even the blue scratched and common wares began to a show a density of body, a clearness of glaze, and an improvement in form. The barbarous art which adorned them also betokened a change for the better. Sales increased; and as to productions of a higher class of ware, such as small articles for ornamental and useful purposes, they were something new to the works, and found ready purchasers in Birmingham, Manchester, and elsewhere. The cupidity of Harrison and his partner was excited. They urged the young man to fresh exertions in this direction, without increasing his share in the profits; whilst personally he was hindered in many ways by their ignorance, interference, and by the absence of those necessaries without which no improvement in an art or a science can be carried onwards. All this was wholly antagonistic to such a nature; for, as commonly the case with knaves, they mistook the character of the man they sought to overreach. Incapable himself of meanness, trickery, or profiting by others' loss, and already well

aware that his art, like land in the care of the agriculturist, must have capital as well as labour bestowed upon it, if generous produce is to be expected, revolted at length against their cupidity. The partnership was brought to an end, much more speedily than is generally supposed. By some it is stated to have lasted two years: it probably did not last more than one.[1]

It is characteristic of the young man, and shows him to have been both in feeling and habit something very different from the coarse journeyman his biographers have hitherto told of, that during the whole period of his partnership with Harrison, and subsequently with Wheildon, he lodged with one of the most respectable families in Stoke. The head of it, Mr. Daniel Mayer, was a draper and mercer, who being a man of substance, and carrying on one of the best businesses in the neighbourhood, had built himself a good house in the centre of the little town. The ground floor next the street was occupied as a shop, behind lay the family apartments, and at the rear of these stretched a large country-garden, long since built over, but then the customary appendage to every house of any pretension. The young man seems to have boarded with the family on the footing of a son or relative; they happily appreciating his staid habits and geniality of temper. From the little we can gather, they seem to have been dissenters; and their opinions agreeing with those he had inherited from his mother, and their daily habits being in conformity with those amidst which he had been reared, his home was in every way most suited to him.

[1] Godfrey Wedgwood, Esq., of Etruria, has informed us that both this and the partnership with Wheildon were of very short duration. With Harrison it probably was; but contingent circumstances seem to prove that that with Wheildon lasted five years.

At this period there were several men in the immediate neighbourhood who were excellent practical chemists, and it is not improbable that young Wedgwood was acquainted with them all. One of these, a Shelton potter named Warner Edwards, possessed an extraordinary amount of chemical knowledge, not only as to all the bodies then ordinarily made in the pot-works, but as to the compounding of colours, and the processes used in enamelling. He died in 1753. But he left his receipts and the secret of various processes to his former apprentice, and then assistant, Mr. Thomas Daniel, whose son in an after day became famous for the beauty of his enamelled ware. Another associate of Warner Edwards, and it is said for some time his secret partner, was the Rev. John Middleton, minister of the old chapel in Hanley; a man of a very high order of intellect, whose taste that way had led him to study chemistry. Such were a few of the men, and their pursuits, who were around young Wedgwood in these early days of patient labour and self-culture; though, as a general rule, young men of that period passed their leisure hours in the nearest taverns, drinking, smoking, and discussing the petty scandals of their neighbourhood, or stale news from London and elsewhere.

A new partnership followed close upon the old one; and he who offered it was, this time, a most worthy man. Thomas Wheildon, like most of the potters of the day, had built up his business from a small foundation. He had commenced it some years prior to 1740 in a small thatched pot-work at Fenton Low; where, following in the track of Dr. Thomas Wedgwood junior, and other of the more artistic class of potters, he made snuffboxes of various shapes and sizes for the Birmingham hardware-

men, and knife-handles for the Sheffield cutlers. So humble were his means at first, that he travelled on foot to Birmingham, carrying his goods with him in a basket strapped to his back. But by incessant industry, and care in improving the wares he made, his means increased, and he was enabled to extend their variety. Amongst these were toys and chimney ornaments, variously coloured with metallic oxides, and glazed with red, black, or white lead. He also made black glazed tea and coffee pots, candlesticks, pickle-leaves, and tortoiseshell and melon table-plates with ornamented and scalloped edges. Wheildon was a man of liberal mind, and in several characteristics was not unlike his young partner. He had in a degree the same clear judgment, the same love of accuracy and perfection, in all relating to his work; the same undeviating integrity in all his business transactions, the same genial temper and benevolence. He was cautious in everything relating to his work, and, 'to prevent his productions being imitated in quality or shape, he always buried the broken articles.'[1] In taste he rose above the ordinary level, and he seems to have taken considerable pains in regard to many of those processes on which perfection of results so much depends. But he was cautious, probably not ambitious; and he stopped short at that point where the courage, the fire, the foresight of true genius take effect, and which carried onwards at no late day the extraordinary man, who thus became his partner, to results hitherto undreamt of. Amongst those whom Wheildon occasionally employed at this date was Aaron Wood, who had been apprenticed, as we have seen, to Dr. Thomas Wedgwood in 1731. He was now a noted modeller, whose work

[1] Shaw's History of Staffordshire Potteries, p. 156.

was competed for by all the principal potters. He made many of Wheildon's best models prior to the date of partnership with young Wedgwood; as those for pickle-leaves, crab-stock handles for tea and coffee pots, and other small articles in which truth of form and delicacy of manipulation were requisites.

In 1751 or 1752, when Josiah Wedgwood entered upon this new connection, Wheildon had several apprentices. Amongst these were, Josiah Spode, in after years the famous potter; Robert Garner, in a minor degree a successful man; and William Greatbach, whose name personally, as well as by his descendants, was destined to be connected with Etruria by a century's admirable service. To show the primitive methods by which the raw supplies of manufacture were yet obtained, the coals used in Wheildon's and other adjacent pot-works were brought, from pits in the neighbouring moorland, on the backs of horses belonging to the small farmers, who by traffic of this laborious kind, and at seasons when not otherwise busy, eked out the narrow profits of their little holdings. One of the farmers who thus laboriously wrought was the father of William Greatbach.

Young Wedgwood's local fame must have been even at this date considerable; for, upon entering on this partnership with Wheildon, one of the agreements was to the effect that he should practise for their joint benefit such secret processes as genius and experimental industry had made his; but this without any necessity of revealing to others what they were. With the view of bringing to ultimate perfection many of his designs, he spent the first six months of his partnership in preparing models, moulds, and other necessary implements; his only assistant being a young man who had made some progress in the

art of modelling. The first result of this laborious preparation was a new kind of green ware, exquisitely moulded in perfect imitation of such natural objects as leaves and fruits. But its rarest speciality was its glazing. For glossiness and brilliancy of colour nothing as yet had been seen like it; although a very good green glaze marked the latest period of Roman pottery in England; and it was used also in connection with the tile-work and domestic pottery of the Middle Ages. But the secret of its exact components passed away at the period when tile-work fell into disuse, and with it all the superior processes of fabrication.

The green ware which up to this date had been manufactured by the Wedgwoods, Wheildon, and others, seems to have been simply coloured in the body with oxide of copper, and then washed over with a thin mixture of lead, flint, and water. But Wedgwood's great improvement was in the glaze itself. Unlike the ordinary flint glaze, it was composed of several substances which, after being fritted together, received a due proportion of calcined copper. The formula of this glaze, which has been preserved to us in an old receipt-book once belonging to Guy Green of Liverpool, shows clearly the vast amount of young Wedgwood's ability; and that he was keenly alive to the increasing efforts which were then being made in the various porcelain works both here and on the Continent to bring all the finer class of glazes as near as possible to the perfection of those in use by the Oriental potters.[1]

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[1] '*Mr. Wedgwood's Green.*

Flint glass, 6.
Red lead, 2. } Vitrified.
White enamel, 4.
Calcined copper, 1/12.

'This will be a blue green, and will require a good deal of yellow ground with it to make grass-green.'—Guy Green's MS. book of Glazes, in the possession of Joseph Mayer, Esq.

'The modern formula for green glaze:—Six pounds of sulphate of

Pickle-dishes, plates for confections and preserves, dessert services, and even tea-cups and saucers, were formed of this ware, and met with an instant demand. Candlesticks, which heretofore had been a production of Wheildon's manufactory, were still further improved in glaze and form. Tea, coffee, and chocolate pots in great variety and more elegance in shape were introduced; and the tea-ware, then generally so barbarous in the miscalled art which adorned it, was decorated with new effects in colours, which, limited as they were, ranged far higher than cobalt-coloured mandarins or many-peaked pagodas. But the choicest of the small wares which can be traced to this period of Wheildon's partnership with Wedgwood, were the little oval snuffboxes. Real gems these were. The specimen we have seen was about an inch and a half long, and an inch deep. The form was a rounded oval, the lid concave, and the glaze a dead white, that in effect rivalled the best specimens of Delft ware, on which masticot had been laid previous to glazing. On the lid and round the sides, little flowers were delicately enamelled in blue, red, and yellow; the leaves being shaded in low-toned greens. The rim was made of lacquered tinfoil, and to this the hinges and fastenings were affixed.

Much of Wheildon's trade in articles of this kind lay with the Birmingham hardwaremen, who buying the snuffboxes by the gross, sold them, after mounting, to the retail dealers. As it had become the custom by this time for the master-potters to transact much of their business directly with the wholesale houses, young Wedgwood,

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copper are dissolved and precipitated by a solution of borax, and then mixed with ten quarts of white glaze.'—Knapp's Chemistry applied to Arts and Manufactures, vol. ii. p. 478.

Oxide of chromium, which gives a beautiful green colour, is also occasionally employed.

from what we can gather, visited Birmingham occasionally on the common affairs of the partnership. Here he opened business connections with various persons which were afterwards of great value to him.

Birmingham was at this date in the full flush of its young prosperity. From time immemorial iron had been its staple, and smithing the trade of three-fourths of its inhabitants. In the reign of Henry VIII., nails were made in vast quantities, tools of every kind, and bits for horses. The manufacture of steel was introduced in the middle of the seventeenth century; and a little later, at the Restoration, the addition of a trade in small wares, such as buttons of every kind, added greatly to its prosperity. At the Revolution, a fresh impetus was given by gun-making, brass-founding, and the manufacture of buckles. There was also a considerable trade in thread, which lasted down to the end of the last century; though a great and very ancient one in leather had died out long before.[1]

The result of this continuous growth of manufacturing prosperity, was a great augmentation in the number of its houses and inhabitants. A few years prior to the Restoration,—namely, in 1650,—Birmingham contained fifteen streets and 5,472 inhabitants. These in 1741—namely in less than a century—were respectively augmented to fifty-four streets and 24,660 inhabitants; Birmingham at this date being more than twice the size of Manchester.[2] Between 1730 and 1758, the price of land doubled itself; and when Bradford engraved his plan of the town in 1750, Birmingham contained 4,170 houses. The majority of the shops, being those of nailers, were mere

[1] Hutton's History of Birmingham, p. 74 et supra.
[2] Ibid. pp. 48–52.

open sheds or smithies, with the invariable bag of nails standing at the door, and their dusky interiors illumined by the never-ceasing shower of sparks from the busy anvils. The japanners, mounters, button-makers, and others, were more silent at their work and less conspicuous to public view; whilst the gunsmiths, brass-founders, steel, boiler, and bellows makers, hid their smithies and foundries down courts, by-streets, and suburban lanes; such places being often encompassed by strips of fields and by garden-plots. This mingled town and country of Birmingham a hundred and twenty years ago is evidenced by the fact that in 1758 a solitary cottage occupied the site of Soho.[1] The roads leading into the town were without exception in a most wretched state, being in winter-time mere hollow ways of a formidable character, the dangers of which were increased by the total absence of public security. Footpads lurked in all the outskirts, highwaymen beset the more open roads, and robberies of all kinds were frequent.[2]

Yet, as the centre of a great industrial district, the hardwares and pottery of Staffordshire, the woollens of Shropshire and Gloucestershire, the hosiery of Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire, and much of the agricultural produce of these and other counties, Birmingham was one of the most flourishing towns in the kingdom; as there necessarily filtered through it a considerable portion of the business concerns of this wide area. In 1741, a weekly paper, to this day one of the best in the district, was started;[3] and, a little later, the Birmingham

[1] Hutton's History of Birmingham, p. 27.

[2] Aris's Birmingham Gazette from its commencement in 1741, and through a subsequent period of at least thirty years, is full of instances of this deplorable state of public security.

[3] Aris's Gazette, now known as the Birmingham Daily Gazette, one of the earliest as still one of the best of the provincial newspapers. None

and Warwick stage-coach, in addition to two or three waggons for heavy goods, kept up a weekly communication with London.[1] From about 1752 there were occasional flower-shows, and sales for the disposal of upholstery goods, feathers, and imported china, as also for collections of pictures. The same date saw the opening of tea-shops, as well as others of various kinds: and about this period working gunsmiths and founders from London, Liverpool, and elsewhere, were tempted by high wages to settle in large numbers in this great centre of flourishing trade.[2]

From its contiguity to the Potteries, Birmingham was much resorted to for many of the articles used by enamellers and others. Colours of the choicest kind were to be obtained there.[3] When a modeller was wanted for the China Works at Bow, or a thrower of mottled and cloudy earthenware for the works at Bristol,[4] he was sought for in this direction; and some of the best of the 'blue and white painters' and enamellers employed at the former place were probably Birmingham and Staffordshire men.[5] Here it was that William Littler made known in

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of these date earlier than the first quarter of the eighteenth century.

[1] 'Birmingham and Warwick stage-coach begins on Monday, March 23, 1747. Sets out from the Swan Inn in Birmingham, every Monday morning at four o'clock, and from the George and White Hart, Aldersgate Street, at the same hour every Thursday morning; and goes by way of Uxbridge, Aylesbury, Winslow, Buckingham, and Banbury; and will go in two days during the summer season, *as soon as the roads permit*. Each passenger to pay 1*l.* 5*s.* to Birmingham; and not to be answerable for any jewels, rings, watches, money, or plate, unless paid for after the rate of three-pence for every twenty shillings value.'—Aris's Birmingham Gazette, March 16, 1747.

[2] Aris's Gazette, various dates through the years 1751 to 1760.

[3] 'This is to give notice that Mrs. Seeman continues to furnish the rose colour or best red made, fit for enamel or china painters, in the same manner as in the lifetime of her husband, Abraham Seeman, deceased. And all enamel and china painters may be furnished on the best terms at Thomas Benton's, the High Street, Birmingham.'—*Aris's Gazette*, Nov. 13, 1752.

[4] Aris's Gazette, 1758.

[5] 'This is to give notice to all painters in the blue and white potting way, and enamellers on china ware, that by applying at the counting-house at the China-house, near Bow, they may meet with employment and proper encouragement, according to their merit. Likewise

1752, by public advertisement, the success of his China Works at Longton Hall near Newcastle; and two years later, choice articles in 'Staffordshire ware' were to be had at shops in the town.[1]

Such was the thriving condition of the great town of the midland counties when Josiah Wedgwood, then a very

(Fig. 57.) SAUCER MADE BY AARON WEDGWOOD, LITTLER'S PARTNER.

young man, went to and fro on Wheildon's business. If he journeyed on horseback, which he probably did, the

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painters brought up in the snuff-box way, japanning, fan-painting, &c., may have an opportunity of trial, wherein, if they succeed, they shall have due encouragement.

'N.B.—At the same house a person is wanted who can model small figures in clay neatly.'—Aris's Birmingham Gazette, November 1753.

[1] 'To be sold at Mrs. Ley's, near the Welch Cross, Birmingham, a choice selection of Staffordshire ware, viz., white cased stone plates and dishes both round and oval, carved sauce boats of various sorts and sizes, Dutch pudding cups, mellons, scalloped, shell-shaped flumery and artichoke cups, custard cups, and all other curiosities that are made. Likewise, plain stone plates and dishes, tortoiseshell plates and dishes, fine teapots, &c. They will be sold cheaper than common for the sake of ready money.' — Aris's Gazette, June 17, 1754.

way in summer was one of the most beautiful in the kingdom. He caught rich glimpses of the wild and yet partially sylvan beauty of Cannock Chase, of the Trent and its rich pastures, of fine old Lichfield, and the heaths, halls, and pleasant villages which lay around. In the great town itself were continuous sales of Oriental china and Delft ware, and of collections of pictures from which a mind like his, open as it undoubtedly was to every influence of an artistic kind, could always gather some new idea or correct some foregone conception. There was also the advantage of mental attrition, as he discussed matters of business with these keen industrious tradesmen over their dingy shop counters, or sat by their warm hospitable homely hearths, and shared the jug of sparkling ale. For the politics of the day led men to think, as did also its social and religious questions; and narrow as most of their views probably were, the middle classes of these rising towns showed as much attachment to the free institutions of their country, as they aided by their thrift and industry the advance of its commercial prosperity. The comparatively free and healthy condition of public and private opinion in these busy places, compared with the bovine mental sloth of the country districts, was a remarkable feature of this period of our national industry; and from these centres of mental activity mostly arose that higher culture on which the intellectual advance of the next generation so much depended. Birmingham at this period, even amidst the din of smithies, was not without some signs of this higher cultivation. The great Baskerville was founding type, and printing exquisite editions of the most classic writers;[1] and other men by various processes and in-

[1] His first printed book, a quarto edition of Virgil, appeared in 1756.

ventions were giving in some degree an artistic impress to the staples which they wrought. Everywhere this mental activity prevailed; preparing the way, as it were, for the philosophic teaching of the great Priestley, the marvellous mechanical improvements of the equally great Watt, the discussions of the Lunar Club, and the chemical and botanical labours of Keir and Withering; although at the same time the lower classes were sufficiently debased and ignorant to be the ready instruments of fanatic religionists and no-Popery politicians.

In the midst of these incessant and enthusiastic labours, Mr. Wedgwood unfortunately injured his affected leg. It was a mere bruise on the shin-bone, which, to a limb in a sound and healthy state, would have been little more than the inconvenience of a day or two, but affected as it was by previous disease, the results were serious. In order to reduce the inflammation, which spread rapidly from his limb to his body, and threatened his life, depletion both by purgatives and bleeding was resorted to, till his debility and emaciation became alike extreme. For months he never left his room. But the long interval was cheered by the visits and ministrations of many loving relatives and friends; and as soon as his mental faculties resumed in some degree their accustomed vigour, he began and carried forward a persistent method of self-culture. He had always been fond of reading, and had indulged in it so far as his hitherto busy life had permitted. But this taste now grew by what it fed on, till it became a passion. He saw clearly that this was a golden time, though a brief one, in which he might supplement the narrow limits of his early education by new acquisitions. He saw clearly the great philosophic fact—and one of which he made such valuable use in after years, in rela-

tion to his great art—that the sources of truth and knowledge are limitless. With his usual sagacity and humility of spirit, he began this self-culture on 'the lowest round of the ladder.' He improved his constructive knowledge of his native tongue, as also of arithmetic. He read such histories of his country as were then extant; made himself well acquainted with its social and industrial features, and its commercial and political relations to other countries. Much as all this was, there was a point still beyond, towards which his high capacity tended. He had a passion for chemical analysis and philosophical speculation, so far as such speculation was founded in nature. He bought and borrowed books, some of which, on chemistry, he copied with his own hand,[1] and he thus enlarged his insight into these two great branches of knowledge; and so ardent became his desire to still further widen the limits of what he knew, as to lead him to say often, as health returned, that the height of his ambition was to obtain a moderate competence which should enable him to devote the rest of his days to pursuits connected with literature and science. In these various studies, he was aided by the advice and ability of his brother-in-law, the Rev. William Willet, a dissenting clergyman, who had a small cure at Newcastle, and who a few years previously had married Mr. Wedgwood's youngest sister, Catherine. Mr. Willet was a man of extensive learning and general acquirements; and his visits to Stoke during his relative's lengthened illness were unremitting.

There were, however, circumstances connected with this long confinement which were necessarily disadvan-

[1] They are now in the possession of Mr. Dingwell, of Edinburgh. Note by Joseph Mayer, Esq.

tageous. Incapable himself of business of any description, he had necessarily to intrust the knowledge of many of his processes and mixtures to one or more of Wheildon's workmen, who, having no personal interest in retaining the secrets connected therewith, divulged them one by one to various manufacturers, who eagerly adopted them, and brought them into general use.

So soon as he had gained a little strength, though even yet emaciated and feeble, he returned to his daily labours at Fenton, and continued them till the close of the year 1758, or the beginning of 1759. The partnership had then reached its limit, and was not renewed. Wheildon, as already seen, was a man of simple and unambitious character. He found he was amassing money by his ordinary trade, and was unwilling to enter upon new speculations, of which the results were in a measure uncertain. On the other hand, his young and intelligent partner saw with prescient eye the capacities of his great art, were taste and capital brought to its aid. His practical skill and knowledge were constantly increasing. He had come forth from his sick-chamber a stronger man intellectually; and meditation had given him, as it were, a firmer hold upon the laws and secrets of his art. He had already succeeded in producing small wares of exquisite taste and beauty; and upon his return to Wheildon's pot-work his genius, there can be no doubt, had taken higher flights still,

(Fig. 58.) CUP AND COVER, WHEILDON WARE. MAYER COLLECTION

and small vases and other ornamental works were the result.

Prior to leaving Fenton, Mr. Wedgwood had commenced making those arrangements, which show his intention of entering into business as a manufacturer. The earliest of these, was the engagement of his second cousin, Thomas Wedgwood, as a journeyman for the term of five years; and the document from which we learn this fact is of great value, as not only affording a correct date on a hitherto much questioned point,[1] but also showing that at the close of 1758 Mr. Wedgwood was yet residing in the parish of Stoke. It has also another feature of interest, as pointing to the beginning of a business connection which was not only life-long, but remarkable for the fidelity, zeal, and friendly attachment which characterised it.

Dec. 30, 1758.

MEMORANDUM of an Agreement between Josiah Wedgwood, of the Parish of Stoke in the County of

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[1] Ward, in his History of the Borough of Stoke-upon-Trent, assigns two distinct dates to the period at which Wedgwood commenced business for himself in Burslem. At page 50 he says, 'Mr. Josiah Wedgwood commenced business in Burslem in 1756.' At page 429 he adds correctly, 'This partnership (with Wheildon) was formed for a term of five years, and on its termination in 1759, Mr. Wedgwood returned to Burslem.' Shaw (History of Staffordshire Potteries) p. 182, remarks: 'He (Wedgwood), afterwards in partnership with Mr. T. Wheildon, manufactured agate hafts, tortoise-shell and melon table plates, and other useful articles; but this was not long continued. . . . Mr. Josiah Wedgwood returned to Burslem about 1760, and commenced business alone.' Godfrey Wedgwood, Esq., of Etruria, in a private communication, assigns the year 1754 as that in which his great-grandfather entered into business for himself; and Mr. Aaron Wedgwood, of Burslem, who is descended from the Big-House line of the Wedgwood family, thinks that the date was 1760 or 1761, as Thomas and John Wedgwood, who were then retiring from business, were owners of the premises in which their young relative first settled down to his great labours. The deed drawn up on the occasion seems now to be irrecoverably lost, though seen by Mr. Aaron Wedgwood as lately as the year 1826. In 1831 and 1834 the buildings were pulled down, and their site added to the Market Place of Burslem. The agreement given in the text settles the point for ever.

Stafford, potter, and Thomas Wedgwood, journeyman, now living at the City of Worcester, potter. The s[d] Thomas Wedgwood engageth to serve the s[d] Josiah Wedgwood as a journeyman from the first of May 1759 to the 11th of November 1765, and is to Rec[ve] of s[d] Josiah Wedgwood twenty-two pounds of lawfull money for every years service.

Witness our hands the day and year as above. } JOSIAH WEDGWOOD. T. WEDGWOOD.

Mr. Wedgwood's capital was doubtless small, and must have consisted principally of what money he had amassed whilst Wheildon's partner. He was also a legatee both by his father's will and that of Mrs. Egerton. For that excellent lady died in January 1756, and her will had proved her friendship to this branch of the Wedgwood family. To Thomas Wedgwood, of the churchyard, she 'gives the Overhouse with all its outhouses, pot-works, barns, buildings, shrubbery, orchard, garden, and the fields adjacent.' To his mother, Mary Wedgwood, widow, of the Churchyard, a legacy of 10*l.*; to her sons John and Josiah, a like sum each; to Catherine Willet the same, and to the widowed Margaret Byerley, a legacy of 20*l.* Thomas Wedgwood above mentioned was also made residuary legatee, and conjointly with John Henshall of Newchapel, who had a legacy of 50*l.*, executor to the estate.[1]

[1] Will of Catherine Egerton, of Burslem. Proved 1756, Registry of the Diocese of Lichfield.

This will contains many very interesting particulars. The John Henshall who is made co-trustee with Thomas Wedgwood became, a few years later, the father-in-law of Brindley, the engineer. To her old and trusted servant, Mary Marsh, Mrs. Egerton leaves a legacy of 60*l.*; to her other servants, Mary Lowe and Peter Yarwood, two guineas each. She gives small legacies to various other kinsmen—to John and Sarah Wedgwood, of Spen Green, 5*l.* each, and to their father, Richard Wedgwood, a silver cup marked R. W., and divers choice pieces of furniture; and 'to my goddaughter, Miss Kitty Dawes, my chair or chaise, and 20*l.*'

It so happened that at this date Mr. Wedgwood's distant cousins, John and Thomas Wedgwood of the Big House, were beginning to retrench their business, for they had accumulated a fortune, and were advanced in years. They had always been on terms of friendship with their young kinsman; and now learning his desire of entering into business for himself, they agreed to let to him, for the yearly sum of 10*l.*, such part of their working premises as they no longer cared to use.[1] This consisted of two kilns, appropriate tile-covered sheds and rooms, and a

(Fig. 59.) IVY HOUSE AND WORKS.

small cottage adjacent. As a whole the Messrs. Wedgwood's works covered a considerable space of ground, for their site now gives accommodation to the Market-

[1] Mr. Aaron Wedgwood, of Burslem, from whom we have derived this information, remembers the premises, and has often seen the agreement connected therewith, though he unfortunately forgets its date. Such premises would now let for 90*l.* or 100*l.* per annum.

House of Burslem, and forms likewise a part of the area around it. The portion thus let to their kinsman fronted what was then a piece of waste land on which the Maypole had formerly stood, but assigned for the site of a school or hall in 1761. It was approached, as seen in the engraving, by an ordinary farm-yard gate; the ivy-clad cottage, with its forecourt or garden standing to the front, the kilns and sheds behind. The deed of conveyance was drawn up on parchment and duly signed.

Thus in the spring of 1759 Josiah Wedgwood entered humbly and modestly upon his great career.

PICTURE CAMEO.—THE LATE MR. JOS MAYER'S COLLECTION.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

FIRST LABOURS AT THE IVY-HOUSE WORKS—MATCHES—ORIGINAL ANECDOTE RELATING THERETO—MR. WEDGWOOD'S LABORIOUS IMPROVEMENTS OF THE ORDINARY CREAMWARE—HIS REPEATED FAILURES—HIS COURAGE AND STEADY PERSEVERANCE CROWNED ULTIMATELY WITH SUCCESS—HIS PUBLIC DUTIES—SUBSCRIPTION TOWARDS A FREE SCHOOL—A MARKET HALL SUBSEQUENTLY ERECTED—WANT OF EDUCATION IN THE DISTRICT—PREVALENCE OF DRUNKENNESS—WESLEY'S LABOURS—CONDITION OF THE PUBLIC ROADS—THE MAJORITY OF THEM MERE FOUNDEROUS LANES—ARTHUR YOUNG'S DESCRIPTION—EARLY ROADS—THE BENEVOLENT LABOURS OF BORLASE AND BENTHAM—THE BURSLEM TURNPIKE-ROAD—GENERAL IMPROVEMENT—COST OF TRANSIT—OTHER ATTENDANT EVILS—BRIDGEWATER CANAL—EARLY SURVEYS FOR THE TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL—BRINDLEY'S MULTIFARIOUS LABOURS—HIS MILLWRIGHT'S SHOP IN BURSLEM—EARLY FLINT MILLS—THE WINDMILL ON THE JENKINS—THOMAS AND JOHN WEDGWOOD, OF THE BIG HOUSE—MR. RICHARD WEDGWOOD, OF SPEN GREEN—HIS DAUGHTER SARAH—HER ADMIRABLE TRAINING—RESULTS OF THE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE CREAM-WARE—FIRST SPECIMENS CHIEFLY EXPORTED—MR. JOHN WEDGWOOD—THE VALUE OF HIS SERVICES TO HIS BROTHER—THE LATHE—MR. TAYLOR, OF BIRMINGHAM—PLUMIER'S EXCELLENT WORK ON TURNING—MATTHEW BOULTON—LEASE OF SOHO—SADLER'S DISCOVERY OF THE ART OF PRINTING UPON EARTHENWARE—ITS VALUE TO WEDGWOOD—MR. CHAFFERS'S IMPROVEMENTS—POT-WORKS IN LIVERPOOL, A PLEASANT COUNTRY TOWN AT THAT DATE—MR. WEDGWOOD'S EARLY VISITS THERETO.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MASTER-POTTER.

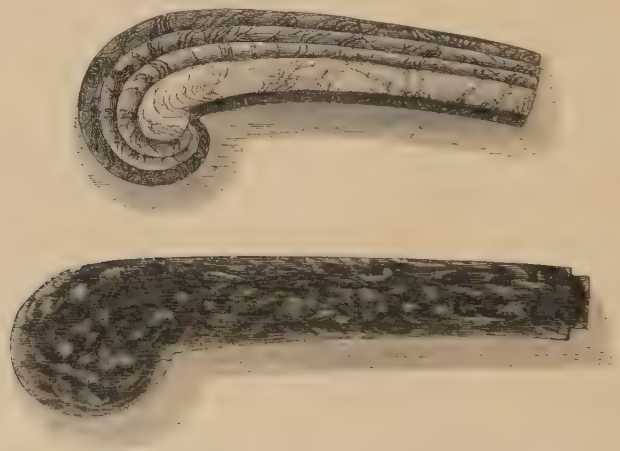
THE effects of an illness of such severity and duration were slow to pass away; and thus rendered for a time incapable of any great or continuous bodily exertion, Mr. Wedgwood restricted his first manufacture to small articles of an ornamental kind. His capital was also limited: till it increased, any great extension of his trade either through the introduction of new kinds of ware, new designs, or the employment of a large body of workmen, was impossible. The latter were at first few in number, and he had even these, as it were, to educate to his hand, for the methods then in use were, generally speaking, of the most slovenly description; but his sound judgment led him, when choice was possible, to select men who ultimately did the greatest justice to his instructions, and whose services were life-long. This keen insight into character was one of Josiah Wedgwood's idiosyncrasies; and it helped him as much in the beginning as in the after organisation of his great works. At this date Mr. Wedgwood made most of his own models, prepared his mixtures, superintended the firing processes, and for a short period was his own clerk and warehouseman. He was thus, so far as his health permitted, incessantly employed in the various departments of his small pot-work.

At this date, and long previously, as already seen, a vast amount of foreign earthenware and porcelain was imported into the kingdom, and this chiefly by the East India Company, of whose cargoes they almost always formed a minor part. A good deal of Dutch fayence, coloured so as to resemble oriental specimens, had also found a market here; and from these sources it was that almost every family of ordinary means possessed tea, and occasionally dinner, services of good quality. Amongst the nobility and rich commoners these were often of great beauty and rarity; and, if of the best kinds of Dutch or oriental fayence, they were occasionally so wholly unique, as to be solitary examples of colouring or ornamentation. Thus, as a matter of course, when an accident occurred, more particularly if to the chief piece of a set of any kind, it was a great object with the possessor to make the loss good. If the ware had come originally from an oriental source, this was often wholly impossible. The same was the case with relation to Dutch ware of the previous century, when the potteries of Delft were at their zenith. To supply a facsimile, recourse had therefore to be made to the home manufacturer. The porcelain works at Chelsea, Bow, Worcester, and elsewhere, had always commissions of this kind on hand; those for fayence or earthenware being usually referred to the more skilful of the Staffordshire or Liverpool potters, who sometimes succeeded, but oftener not, in this work of imitation.

Wedgwood soon came in for a share of this sort of business, although it was the custom of many of his neighbours to refuse such commissions, involving, as they often did, so large an outlay for modelling and enamelling as to leave little or no margin of profit, although a high price was

charged. But his work was fast growing in repute. His beautiful green-glazed ware, his exquisite little snuff-boxes, his perforated and streaked dessert plates, had naturally led to inquiries as to their fabricator; and commissions followed, which he wisely accepted. These were often from the local aristocracy, whose patronage was worth so much in other respects; and there can be little doubt that in replacing some old dowager's favourite tea-pot, or some rubicund lord's treasured punchbowl, he helped to found a business connection of great after value. An interesting anecdote has been handed down in relation to one of these matches, although the date of its occurrence is probably later than the first years of his commencing business. An aristocratic family residing some distance from Burslem had a dinner-service of oriental Delft, which for its beauty or some other reason they highly prized. Of this, an eighteen-inch dish, the largest in the service, had been broken, and great pains had been taken to replace it. Various potters had tried their hand, but without success. At length Mr. Wedgwood was applied to. Confident of his own ability, yet not assuming that he should succeed better than his neighbours, he brought all his skill to the work, and after various trials and their failure, he produced a perfect facsimile of body, probably by a union of native marl and sand mixed with clay—the ingredients by which the Delft potters had succeeded in producing ware which, in thinness and lightness, was akin to oriental porcelain. The dish was then finished with an enamel of a bluish tinge, and a perfect copy was the result. This success was a source of great satisfaction to both master and workmen; and as the dish was far too precious to be intrusted to any ordinary means of conveyance, particularly as

Christmas was near, and the roads all but impassable, Mr. Wedgwood selected a trusty servant, named William Moore, to bear it home. Moore was warehouseman at the Burslem works, as afterwards at those of Etruria; and dressed in his best, mounted on Taffy, his master's horse, and with the dish, carefully wrapped in straw and paper, placed on the saddle before him, he set forth on his journey. To the surprise of everybody he was absent a week, and he declared, upon his return, that no man could have gone quicker, for that he had been so feasted and treated the whole time, on account of his master's successful work, as with difficulty to tear himself from such abundant hospitality; and the only wish he had was that every Christmas to come might bring its dish, and the job of carrying it in triumph home.[1]



(Figs. 60, 61.) AGATE KNIFE-HAFTS IN THE POSSESSION OF MR. AARON WEDGWOOD.

The trials and experiments incident to these imitations must have added greatly to Wedgwood's knowledge of

[1] This trifling yet interesting fact is related by Mr. Aaron Wedgwood, of Burslem, who knew William Moore very well.

his art. In addition to green-glaze ware, tea-services, knife-hafts, tortoiseshell and melon plates, snuff-boxes, vases, candlesticks, and other small articles, he gradually added the manufacture of white stoneware, of which tiles for fireplaces formed a portion. On these were reliefs, in other coloured clay, of such natural objects as storks fishing, or ducks casting water into a fountain from their bills. They form his earliest attempts in that marvellous relief work which, upon the invention of the fine white biscuit, as afterwards the jasper bodies, led to such great and artistic results. These various articles met with a rapidly increasing sale; for the more ornamental portion were soon added to the list of exported wares, and their imitation by the neighbouring manufacturers formed in a short time an ordinary part of trade.

In little more than a year from the date of its commencement, Mr. Wedgwood had sufficient capital to increase his business; orders came in from many sources; and his health was now so fully reestablished, as to insure to him the ability of vigorously prosecuting whatever object he might take in hand. No doubt this was in a great measure due to his happier circumstances, as regarded the means of advancing his art, as also to that freedom of individual action, on which the result of original conceptions so materially depends.

A man less keen in judgment than Josiah Wedgwood would have built a thousand castles in the air on the foundations of this young success; but he saw distinctly that the time had not yet arrived for the development of his manufacture on a large scale. There was, in fact, a vast amount of preliminary work to do; and till this was fully effected, results of either magnitude or excellence were impossible. His first step in this business of

extension and improvement was to hire some more hovels and working sheds in close vicinity to the Ivy House; his next, to considerably increase his body of workmen. To each of these he assigned a certain branch in his manufacture; it being still the ordinary custom for the journeymen potters to pass from one kind of labour to another, just as impulse or convenience prompted, and this without reference to either the necessities of the moment or their master's interest. Wedgwood had long observed the evils of this system—the idle, slovenly, and irregular habits it begot in the workmen, and the loss of time and waste of efficiency in regard to productive results. Whilst his brother's apprentice, and still very young, he had, as we have seen, tried to modify somewhat this old system of things; and now that he was thoroughly his own master he resolved that, so far as he was concerned, they should no longer exist. At first he met with much sullen opposition, often amounting to an insubordination that necessitated immediate dismissal; but by firmness, patience, and great kindness he succeeded, in a comparatively short time, in bringing his manufactory into efficient order. His men found that it was much better to obey than to oppose; and that the regulations that they had at first clamoured against facilitated their labour to a surprising degree.

The manufacture of white ware, relief tiles, and small ornamental articles, was carried on at the new works. But Wedgwood saw clearly that it was not these classes of ware which would either open or secure a new and great market. What was wanting was a ware of a superior description, so excellent in all respects as to be suited to the tables of the upper classes; and which, when improvements and facility in production should enable the manu-

facturer to sell it at a cheaper rate, might reach those of the middle classes. He had for a considerable period, as we have seen, turned his attention towards the improvement of the ordinary cream-coloured ware, manufactured at various pot-works in Burslem and its neighbourhood. But his experiments had been desultory; rather directed to future purposes than immediate results. He now, however, concentrated all his energies for a period in this one direction. Every essential of body, glaze, form, and ornament was alike the object of his care. But through the various necessary processes his patience was often sorely tried; his repeated failures most disheartening. One kiln after another was pulled down in order to correct some defect, or effect some necessary improvement. His losses from this source alone were at this period very heavy, and the ware itself was often destroyed before he could bring his firing processes to the requisite degree of perfection. His chemical combinations often baffled him; and his experiments both in body and glaze would, after the greatest pains, turn out entire failures. Yet, unwearied and indomitable in spirit, he persevered, and success came. He had to invent, and, if not that, to improve almost every tool, instrument, and apparatus; and to seek for smiths and machinists to work under his guidance. Lathes, whirlers, punches, gravers, models, moulds, drying-pans, and many other things were all variously improved. He often passed the whole day at the bench beside his men, and in many cases instructed them individually. The first pattern of each original piece he almost always made himself; and though no great draughtsman, the enamellers could work from his designs.

From this course of preparative work he rarely rested.

He spent the evenings and a large part of each night in making chemical experiments, in contriving instruments and tools to effect some novel process, in modelling, in sketching ornaments and patterns, or otherwise preparing for the business of the succeeding day. So much hold did many of these inventions take upon his mind as to deprive him of sleep for nights together; and rest rarely came till he had satisfied his stern will and fastidious taste in relation to the object he had in view.

In the meanwhile he did not lose sight of his public duties. A Free School for the poorer children of Burslem had been established by subscription in 1749;[1] and now, in 1760, the principal inhabitants of the town petitioned Sir Nigel Gresley, Bart., and Ralph Sneyd, Esq., Lords of the Manor, for a small piece of waste land on which the Maypole formerly stood, whereon to erect a building for a school; the petitioners stating that there was but one school in the town, and that, for want of another, two parts of the children out of three were put to work without any learning whatsoever. The land was granted, and the subscription amounted to a considerable sum; the chief potters giving 10*l.* each, and the least ones 5*l.* Amongst the 10*l.* subscribers appears the name of Josiah Wedgwood, as also those of his eldest brother, Thomas Wedgwood of the Overhouse, and their distant cousin Burslem Wedgwood. Considering the value of money at the period, 10*l.* was a considerable sum for a man to give who as yet had done little more than make his start in life, and was struggling with many difficulties and expenses attending the introduction of great

[1] Amongst the subscribers was the second husband of Catherine Wedgwood (Thomas Bourne, Esq.), who gave 20*0l.* His widow, in her third name of Catherine Egerton, gave 40*l.*, and left by will 20*l.* Thomas and John Wedgwood, of the Big House, also gave 50*l.*

improvements in the staple of the district. In this respect he placed himself upon an equality with far richer men; a proof in itself of that bravery of spirit and largeness of heart which seem part of the essence of genius in its highest development. But with his usual sound judgment Josiah Wedgwood relied, with perfect safety, upon the results of his steady industry being quite equal to any public or private demands which might be made upon them; and that any sum bestowed upon the improvement of the working-classes would be as beneficial to the masters as to those whom they employed.

The original purpose of erecting a school-house seems to have been subsequently changed or modified, for in the lease of the land granted, which bears the date of June 24, 1761, the site is said to be given for erecting thereon a Market Hall, School, or other public edifice, or building as should be thought needful. The ultimate result was the erection of the Town Hall of Burslem. From this date the market grew around it by degrees. It commenced, in the first instance, by country butchers and others bringing occasionally a carcase or two of meat, and a few bags of meal and potatoes, for sale; other commodities were gradually added. In the course of thirty years (1761–1791) the market of Burslem became so considerable, both as to the numbers of persons attending it and the goods displayed, that trestles and boards were provided by the trustees of the Hall for the use of butchers and other chapmen, for which they paid a weekly sum as rent or toll; the income being expended in keeping the Town Hall and Market Place in repair.[1]

Those who were sufficiently enlightened to estimate the value of education, even in its most elementary form,

[1] Ward's History of Stoke-upon-Trent, p. 236.

must have regretted the failure of the original purpose for which the subscriptions were raised, for the lower classes of the Pottery district were yet, generally speaking, brutally coarse and ignorant. Drunkenness was still the predominant vice. The highest class of master-potters were now, comparatively speaking, a well-educated set of men, who individually had done much to raise their art from its low condition in the early part of the eighteenth century; but those of a lower degree, whose chief business lay with the manufacture of the coarser kinds of ware, yet, in many instances, resorted to the alehouses as soon as they had set their wares in the oven, and remained there till they were ready to draw. The cratemen who hawked these goods about the country usually congregated in the same places, and, not a whit more sober than the masters, rarely separated without a fight or drunken row, about the rotation in which they were called upon to buy, or the quality of the ware in their individual lots. With their brains muddled and their profits wellnigh gone, the masters then returned home, too often to beat their wives, quarrel with their neighbours, or otherwise render themselves so obnoxious as to necessitate the appearance of the parish constable, who generally tied the delinquent to the signpost in front of the Red Lion tavern till he had recovered his senses, or promised amendment.

John Wesley, whose labours did so much indirectly to bring about a better state of things, has left us a striking picture of the brutality and indifference of the lower classes of Burslem at this period. He paid his first visit to the town in March 1760. A multitude assembled to hear him preach at five in the evening. 'Deep attention sat on every face, though as yet accompanied by deep igno-

rance.' The next day 'I preached at eight to near double the number, some quite innocent of thought; five or six were laughing or talking till I had near done, and one of them threw a clod of earth which struck me on the side of the head, but it neither disturbed me nor the congregation.' [1] Brutal as this conduct was, it was some degrees nearer civilisation than that of the colliers of South

(Fig. 62.) CAMEO MEDALLION OF JOHN WESLEY.—MAYER COLLECTION.

Staffordshire, of whom Charles Wesley thus records when he visited Walsall and its neighbourhood in 1743: 'The street was full of fierce Ephesian beasts (the principal men setting them on), who roared and shouted, and threw stones incessantly. At the conclusion, a stream of ruffians was suffered to beat me down from the steps. I rose, and having given the blessing, was beat down again; and so

[1] Journal, p. 465, edit. 1828.

a third time.'[1] Facts such as these seem rather to belong to the social condition of the Middle Ages than to the first sixty years of the last century, when England was making such strides in founding her commercial and industrial greatness. But nothing as yet had been done for the education of the people; and except for this reawakening by the Wesleys and by Whitfield, and such vitality as was left in dissenting congregations, Religion seems to have abnegated every vocation but those of securing the riches and honours of this life, and of promulgating tenets as unworthy of Englishmen as they were obnoxious to civil freedom.

The elder Wesley's patience and forbearance with his Burslem congregation was well rewarded, for in the succeeding year, 1761, he preached to a large and attentive auditory. Three years later he considered the 'poor potters' of Burslem a 'more civilised people than the better sort (so called) at Congleton;' and four years later—namely, in March 1768—he was called upon to open the new meeting-house his Burslem followers had lately built.

About this period—1760–1761—Wedgwood, conjointly with other manufacturers and inhabitants of Burslem and its neighbourhood, turned his attention to the condition of the public roads. For years this question had come pointedly under his own observation. As a lad he had heard much talk of the miseries attending, especially in winter time, the traffic through the wretched lanes (for roads they could be scarcely called) of the district. The way before his father's pot-works leading up Cross Hill into the town, on the one hand, and to the Hanley Road on the other, was a case in point. Many a time he had

[1] Watson's Life of John Wesley, p. 114.

seen the wretched pack-horses and asses heavily laden with coal from Norton or Whitfield, with tubs full of ground flint from the mills, crates of ware, or panniers of clay, hacked to pieces by the whips of their cruel drivers, whilst floundering knee-deep through the muddy holes and ruts that were all but impassable.[1] Just above his father's dwelling was a little thatched alehouse, round which he had seen many a string of these poor weary beasts, whilst their masters sotted within on the ale-bench. It was a wretched life alike for man and brute; for if a horse stumbled or missed its step in the holes and ruts of these execrable lanes, it was with difficulty raised again. From the time when he approached manhood, and afterwards when he became more actively employed, Wedgwood saw clearly that, let the improvements in pottery be what they might, little could be done to develop the trade itself, till the means of communication between one district and another were brought closer to the requirements of a civilised people. The nearest turnpike-roads to Burslem were the Liverpool and London road at Lawton on the borders of Cheshire, and the Newcastle and Uttoxeter road at Stoke; between these were nothing but founderous lanes of the worst description. Yet along these all the traffic of the district had to pass—the coals from the scattered pits on the moorland ridge, clay, flints, and shop-goods from Winsford and Willington Ferry, salt from Lawton and other places in Cheshire,

[1] Long before the days of Peter Bell, the potters' beasts of burden seem to have had little to recommend them as far as appearance went, as we glean from the following curious advertisement:—'Rode away with on Friday the 11th of this instant September from Carraway head near Bassett Poll within two miles of Sutton Colefield by John Wilden a potter, who travelled the country with earthenware on three asses and a horse. A large black slender horse, with two or three saddle spots, a sore place on the near side by the point of the saddle, and very hollow eyes, with large flat feet and a whisk tail.'—Aris's Birmingham Gazette, September 21, 1747.

and all the back traffic with manufactured goods. Goods were also conveyed along the lanes to Bewdley and Bridgnorth on the Severn; the journey there and back occupying four days. The roads to the north of Burslem were the worst. That to the Red Bull at Lawton in Cheshire was so very narrow, deep, and founderous as to be almost impassable for carriages, and in winter almost for pack-horses. For this reason, carts containing materials and ware to and from Liverpool and the Salt-Wyches in Cheshire were obliged to go by Newcastle, and thence to the Red Bull, a distance of nine miles and a half, instead of five by the more direct route between Burslem and the Red Bull. Still worse were the Cheshire roads beyond Lawton. Those between Manchester and Knutsford were mere tracks of heavy sand cut into prodigious ruts, which became pools of sheer mud in wet weather. 'At Knutsford,' says Arthur Young, writing of his Tour into the North of England in 1768, 'it is impossible to describe these infernal roads in terms adequate to their deserts.' The road thence to Newcastle 'is in general a paved causeway, as narrow as can be conceived, and cut into perpetual holes, some of them two feet deep measured on the level; a more dreadful road cannot be imagined, and wherever the country is the least sandy, the pavement is discontinued, and the ruts and holes most execrable. I was forced to hire two men at one place, to support my chaise from overthrowing, in turning out for a cart of goods overthrown and almost buried. Let me persuade all travellers to avoid this terrible country, which must either dislocate their bones with broken pavements, or bury them in muddy sand.'[1] The same writer describes the road from Newcastle to Burslem as being full of

[1] Tour through the North of England, vol. iii. p. 433.

muddy ruts cut deep in clay; but beyond, there seems to have been a change for the better. To Stone and Lichfield the road, which was turnpike, was in a sufficient state of repair, and continued thus till within a mile and a half of Birmingham, when it was again all but impassable for ruts and sloughs. Yet it must not be imagined that Staffordshire and Cheshire stood out, singular examples for the badness of their roads from the other counties of England. The same state of things prevailed in every direction. 'A gentleman in the country,' says a writer in 1752, 'or a citizen in London, thinks no more of visiting his relations than traversing the deserts of Nubia.' [1]

This barbarous condition of all the lines of internal communication, had for centuries done more to retard the civilisation of the country, than even the absence of capital. The Romans, far in advance of their time in this respect, had opened most of the resources of the kingdom by a system of magnificent roads, by which the products alike of the Continent and of Britain itself were dispersed wherever needful. But these had fallen into decay prior to the Conquest; and after it their ruin was complete. The bridges were swept away, the forests grew up again,[2] every district became more and more confined within itself; and but for the exigencies of war, the necessities of trade, and the adventurous spirits engaged in both, this isolation would have been almost absolute. The Church, in this respect, did little for the

[1] Gentleman's Magazine, vol. xxii. p. 553.

[2] 'This forest (Knaresborough) was once so woody that I have heard of an old writing said to be secured in the chest at Knaresborough church which obliged them to cut down so much yearly as to make a convenient passage for the wood-carriers from Newcastle to Leeds.' — Thoresby's Diary, vol. i. p. 424.

This was a yearly custom in many of the wooded districts of England. The road between London and St. Albans was at an early period only kept open by a frequent use of the axe.

civilisation of those intrusted to its spiritual care. Here and there, in the Fens, the abbots of such opulent religious houses as Peterborough and Croyland constructed causeways across the watery wastes; and in the north-western and midland counties on the line of the great Chester road, the monasteries near at hand kept portions of it in reasonable repair, for the sake of the benefactions insured by the resort of pilgrims and worshippers. But, generally speaking, the outlay by the monastic bodies for the construction of roads was directed to the local purposes of communication with some dependent church or outlying farm. In the wills of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries we begin to find the people themselves taking interest in this great question of improving the roads of their respective districts, and both materials and money are bequeathed to mend the 'fowle ways.'[1] Nor was the Legislature idle, though

[1] Various instances are to be found in the Bury Wills and Inventories, as also in those of Durham.

'Itim. I gyue and bequeth to the noysome hyewayes, where most nede requyre, ther to bestow tenne shyllynge.' Will of Sir William Paynter, Parryshe preeset of Bradwell in Suffolk.—Bury Wills and Inventories, p. 154.

'A part to be spent in hyweyys.' Will of Anne Barett, 1504.—Bury Wills, p. 96.

The following clause in the will of John Cowper of Hawkstede, who died in 1522, will give some idea of the way in which even the principal streets of a town were dependent on private benevolence for being kept at all in order:—'I will that myn executors shall gader and carye or do gadyr or cary, six score lods of smale stones wt tho and suche as I have gadyrid all redy; and those I will shalbe leyed in the highweyes betwyn the Southgate and seynt Mary chyrche when most nede shalbe; and that be don xx lods yerly til it be don.'—Notes to Bury Wills, p. 252.

'Also I wyll that ye hygeway from ye lyme kylle uppe towards the heth ledyng toward Ipswych be made and levelde at my cost and charge wt grawell and stonys; and that to be don by the advyse of my executours when they have ony mony in stor^e and no sonēr.' Will of John Perfey, Draper, of Bury, 1509.—Bury Wills, p. 112.

'Also I giue and bequeath a yearlie rent of ten shillinges to be yerelie bestowed vpon repayringe of the comon waye, leadinge from Saxon Streete in Woodedytton in the said countie of Cambridge vnto the church of Woodedytton aforesaid.' Will of Agnes Borrowdale of Bury.—Bury Wills, p. 158.

'One halfe of the money to be dystrybutyd among my kynred wher most nede ys, and the oyd halfe to be dewydet in ij parte; the one part to the mendyng of the fowle slowys betwene thys my howse Rewytte gate to the rode ward.' Will of William Shepard of Mendelysham, 1537.—Bury Wills, p. 132.

'Also I bequith to bridges and

the effects were usually temporary and local. During three centuries—namely, from the reign of Edward III. to that of Charles II.—various Acts were passed for the improvement of the public roads, by the collecting of tolls, by making parishes liable for their repair, and by the erection, soon after the Restoration, of turnpike-gates. But the substantial benefits which followed were small in amount. The more important roads—lanes and byways had no care at all—were generally kept in repair by the compulsory labour of the parish pauper; and even so late as 1754, the traveller seldom saw a turnpike for 200 miles after leaving London. But at this date, or somewhat previously, a change took place. The Government, taught by the events of the Rebellion of 1745, that bad roads might imperil the safety of the kingdom, began to urge on their improvement; and in a few of the counties benevolent and enlightened individuals exerted themselves to the same purpose. Dr. Borlase, the historian of Cornwall, and the Rev. James Bentham, the celebrated prebendary of Ely Cathedral, are cases in point of this enlightened interest in the improvement of their respective districts. Bentham was treated as a visionary by his neighbours for suggesting the improvement of the Fens by drainage, and the practicability of increasing the trade and intercourse between Cambridgeshire and the surrounding counties by means of turnpike-roads. He persevered in spite of obloquy and prejudice, and with the assistance of a few friends, as enlightened as himself, obtained an Act of Parliament, in 1763, for improving the road from

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heighe waves fortie shillings.' Will of Cuthbert Conyers of Layton, Esq., September 1558.—Durham Wills, p. 185.

From specimens we have seen, the Wills of the other English dioceses — were search made — would largely and interestingly add to this list.

Cambridge to Ely. He lived to see his benevolent labours crowned with the utmost success; for they inaugurated the extension of the turnpike system over the whole of the Fen district. Some influence, however, far more powerful than mere individual efforts, or even government control, feeble and inefficient as this was, was wanting to spread these great advantages over the surface of the kingdom. Happily this existed, and formed a part of the industrial movement of the period. Trade was extending itself in every direction, and its necessities and accessories were not unperceived. From this date therefore, when the potters of Burslem and its neighbourhood were petitioning Parliament for an Act to improve a portion of their chief road to Liverpool and the Salt-Wyches of Cheshire, we can trace the slow improvement of the internal communications of the kingdom; although as yet confined to the environs of the manufacturing towns, and a few chief highways.[1]

The Burslem potters were not suffered to obtain the Bill without opposition. The inhabitants of Newcastle, the innkeepers chiefly, raised the utmost clamour, and used such parliamentary and aristocratic influence as they possessed to defeat it in both Houses; their pretence being that it would injure the interests of their town, by curtailing trade and diverting therefrom a large and increasing traffic. The Bill, however, passed in the session of 1763, though with an abridgment of the road at its south end; it being made to terminate at Burslem, instead of falling into the Newcastle and Uttoxeter turnpike-road at Stoke. But the improvement, so far as it went, was beneficial. A distance

[1] Notices in Aris's Gazette show that in 1762 the chief highways leading into Birmingham had been much improved. Two years earlier the road between Liverpool and Warrington was made fit for the passage of vehicles.

of full four miles and a half was saved, and the amended road was henceforth passable in winter time. Many other adjacent lanes and roads seem to have been put into repair at this date; and a few of the principal carriers—as Daniel Morris of Lawton—soon brought into use carts and waggons, in addition to the accustomed strings of panniered mules and horses, in their traffic to Winsford, the Salt-Wyches, and Liverpool direct. Somewhat earlier than this, what were called 'pot-waggons' had been introduced for the conveyance of crates of ware between Burslem and the Severn at Bridgnorth and Bewdley; and Willington Ferry, on the Trent, near Burton. These on their return journeys brought back shop-goods, flints, and clay to Newcastle and the Potteries.

We have seen that a few of the original roads about Burslem and the surrounding villages had been, in the first instance, mere trackways marked out by upright stones, which led from the Abbey at Hulton to its granges and dependent chapelries. Many other of the roads of the district seem to have had an equally primitive origin. These had been at first mere trackways across the waste; which as population, and consequently traffic, increased, and enclosure became general, were developed into hollow ways and founderous lanes of the worst possible description. They were, in fact, mere quags in winter time, and hardened ruts in summer; being rarely mended, though some of the townships were assessed for their repair.

As the great waste of the Pottery valley, and the slopes of the adjacent moorland, were by degrees enclosed, each man marking out distinctly his little patrimony or holding by wall, fence, or hedge, it might seem that difficulties would arise as to the traffic to and fro from pits which lay within or beyond these enclosures. But, as a

rule, the potters appear to have settled these points pretty peaceably amongst themselves. Upon leasing pits for clay and coal, they usually, if the way lay across another man's land, bound themselves by deed to suffer no one else to trespass. For this right of traffic they paid a yearly rent, for a specified term of years, partly in money, partly in a certain amount of coal laid down free of dross and stone at the lessor's door.[1] But up to nearly the close of the first quarter of the eighteenth century, viz. till about 1719, all the clay and much of the coal used in the Burslem pot-works were taken by the freeholders of the town from plots and strips of unenclosed and unoccupied land. From this cause the streets were full of holes, and the sides of the adjacent lanes hollowed out and disfigured. A stop was put to this practice by the right being bought from the freeholders by the Hon. George Parker, son of Lord Chief Justice Parker, afterwards Earl of Macclesfield.[2] Coal and clay became henceforth increased objects of traffic from adjacent townships, such as Norton, Whitfield, and Sneyd. The former was conveyed on horses' backs at the rate of a penny a mile; and the load, for which sevenpence was paid at the pit's mouth, varied from two to three hundredweight, as the colliers, wasteful amidst abundance, neither measured

[1] Articles of agreement for a privilege of this nature were drawn up in 1720 between Thomas Bourne, Esq., of Burslem, and Catherine his wife, Richard Cartwright of Sneyd, and Urian Leigh of Great Fenton, for the two latter to draw coals from pits opened at Sneyd, across lands called the Great Old Field, the Little Old Field, and Old Field Lane, the property of the two former. The term was for twenty-one years, at a yearly rent of two pounds ten shillings and three tons of cannel coal, free from dross and stone, to be laid down at the door of the said Thomas Bourne, in Burslem. This right of way for the traffic aforesaid is stringently restricted to the owners of the pits at Sneyd.—Abstract of Deed, Mayer MSS.

This Richard Cartwright was very probably the Burslem butterpot-maker mentioned by Dr. Plot.

[2] Ward's History of Stoke-upon-Trent, p. 599; Shaw's History of Staffordshire Potteries, p. 124.

nor weighed it, but gave to each load the draught that came to hand.[1]

The roads were thus incessantly traversed by gangs of pack-horses, carts, and waggons, all heavily laden with clay, flints, coals, pot-ware, and miscellaneous goods of every description. The general rate of conveyance was 9*s.* per ton for ten miles. Thus the conveyance of a ton of goods between Burslem and Winsford in Cheshire cost 18*s.*; and 34*s.* between Burslem and Willington on the Trent. The transit by water was equally expensive; 3*s.* 4*d.* a ton for even the shortest distance was the minimum charge insisted on by the Mersey and Irwell Navigation Company, and between Liverpool and Manchester the charge was 12*s.* a ton. Such rates were all but prohibitory of the extension of the trade in earthenware, beyond certain narrow limits; and those who, like Mr. Wedgwood, were interested in the manufacture saw that means of transit more speedy and secure must be introduced before the manufacturer could realise his due share of profit, or hope to see his improvements act and react upon the internal trade of the kingdom. There were also other evils, besides the one of prohibitory cost, incident to this imperfect state of internal communication—the slowness of transit, the risk from floods,[2] breakage, and the notorious dishonesty of too many of those employed in the conveyance of goods. The boatmen on the various rivers were no other than inland pirates. Those of the Weaver, Douglas, and Sankey navigations had an unenviable notoriety in this respect; and the bargemen of the

[1] Shaw's History of Staffordshire Potteries, p. 149.

[2] In several of the early numbers of Aris's Birmingham Gazette, instances are recorded of waggons, chiefly laden with crates of earthenware, being submerged whilst fording the Trent. In one case the waggon, driver, and horses were alike swept away. The fords of the Severn were in winter time even more perilous.

Trent and Severn had scarcely a better reputation. Mooring their barges in the solitary reaches of the brooks and rivers, they robbed crates, baskets, hogsheads, and bales; and either carried their spoil to the ports whither they were bound, or disposed of it at a cheap rate in the towns and villages they passed by. Nothing came amiss to their dishonest hands; and the potters whose crates and hogsheads of goods reached Liverpool, Hull, and Bristol with two-thirds of their contents intact, were to be considered fortunate. The theft of goods during transit by pack-horse and waggon was carried on to a considerable amount, but nothing to the extent which characterised the transit by water. The introduction of canal navigation mitigated in some degree this great evil, but not so much as its promoters had sanguinely anticipated.

The question of internal communication by means of navigable canals had by this time taken considerable hold upon the public mind; of that section of it especially which was engaged in manufactures. The Duke of Bridgewater, with James Brindley for his engineer, was now carrying forward with great success his scheme of bringing Manchester into direct communication with the port of Liverpool. The canal between Worsley and Manchester was opened in July 1761; and early in the September following Brindley was engaged in levelling, for the further extension of the canal from Longford Bridge to the Mersey at Hempstones, eight miles below Warrington, from which there was a natural tideway to Liverpool, about fifteen miles distant.

The idea of opening a water-communication across the midland districts of the kingdom was made public much earlier than is generally supposed. In 1717 a Dr. Thomas

Congreve of Wolverhampton published a pamphlet entitled 'A Scheme and Proposal for making a Navigable Communication between the Rivers of Trent and Severn in the County of Stafford.' The project appeared thus on paper, and no more, till nearly forty years afterwards, when it was taken up in another form by the merchants of Liverpool; and at the instance of Mr. Hardman, one of their body, and their representative in Parliament, a survey was made in 1755, by Messrs. Taylor of Manchester and Mr. Eyes of Liverpool, of the proposed line, which was to proceed by Chester to Stafford, Derby, and Nottingham. In December 1759, and during the earlier months of 1760, a fresh survey was made by Brindley,[1] at the sole expense of Earl Gower, afterwards Marquis of Stafford, and Lord Anson; but the project was of too formidable a character to meet readily with supporters, and the construction of the Duke of Bridgewater's canal had not as yet afforded to the engineer a practical knowledge of how difficulties were to be overcome, or convinced the general public of the immense advantages arising from direct and easy communication between one district of country and another.

James Brindley was already a popular character in the Potteries. His uncommon ingenuity, great practical skill, persistent industry, and reliable honesty of purpose had led by degrees to a great range of business, which was as varied in its character as scattered far and wide. He constructed dam-heads in Yorkshire, built or improved silk-mills at Congleton and Macclesfield, sank wells in the agricultural districts, applied to many of the old mills upon the watershed to the north of Burslem machinery for the grinding of calcined flints and other

[1] Brindley's Memorandum Book. Mayer Collection.

potter's materials; and as time went on busied himself with the construction of steam-engines upon a principle of his own. Wide as this range of duty was, it centred locally in Burslem; and here in 1750, or somewhat before, he had hired a millwright's shop belonging to Thomas

(Fig. 63.) CAMEO MEDALLION OF BRINDLEY.

and John Wedgwood, which, situated down a yard in the vicinity of the spot on which they were then building the Big House, was environed with pot-works and gardens. Thus brought into connection with the Wedgwoods, and employed by them in various ways, an intimacy of a

most friendly character sprang up between them and the engineer. It was only limited by Brindley's frequent and lengthened absences from Burslem. But when he came there, either on business to his wheelwright's shop, or to see his brother, John Brindley, who had settled in the village, the hospitable meal, the cup of sparkling Staffordshire ale, the glowing hearth, and the hearty hand-shake were his under more than one roof-tree of the well-to-do Wedgwoods.

Soon after the death of Mrs. Egerton, in January 1756, Thomas Wedgwood of the Churchyard, eldest brother of Josiah, and her heir-at-law and residuary legatee, seems to have let or sold to his distant cousins, John and Thomas Wedgwood of the Big House, a part of his inherited estate at Brownhills known as the Great Old Field or Jenkins, on which to erect a windmill, of greater power than any yet known in the district, for grinding calcined flints. The site, or its immediate neighbourhood, as it was the highest ground in or immediately about Burslem, appears to have been long previously occupied by a mill, as some buildings adjacent were known as the 'Millhouse cottage and pot-works,' and as such had been leased to the brothers Taylor, during those days when Mrs. Egerton bore her second marriage name of Bourne. Here it was that Brindley busied himself with what he had previously termed a 'now invontion,' and which undoubtedly refers to the introduction of 'stampers' as a crushing power, and to the use of a vertical shaft with four arms to which the grinding-stones were attached in the subsequent operation of mixing the crushed flints with water. This 'now invontion' has been generally but most erroneously supposed to refer to the discovery of the method of grinding flints in water; but this, as we have already shown from the

specification of the patents of 1726 and 1732, had been introduced long before.[1] The merits of Brindley in thus improving the crushing and motive power of flint-mills, by the invention of stampers, slide-rods where the moving power was at a distance, and by the use of a vertical shaft to the arms of which were attached masses of granite, are sufficiently great without robbing Thomas Benson and his humble coadjutors of a particle of the fame due to a discovery which did so much towards ameliorating a great physical evil then incident to the potter's art.

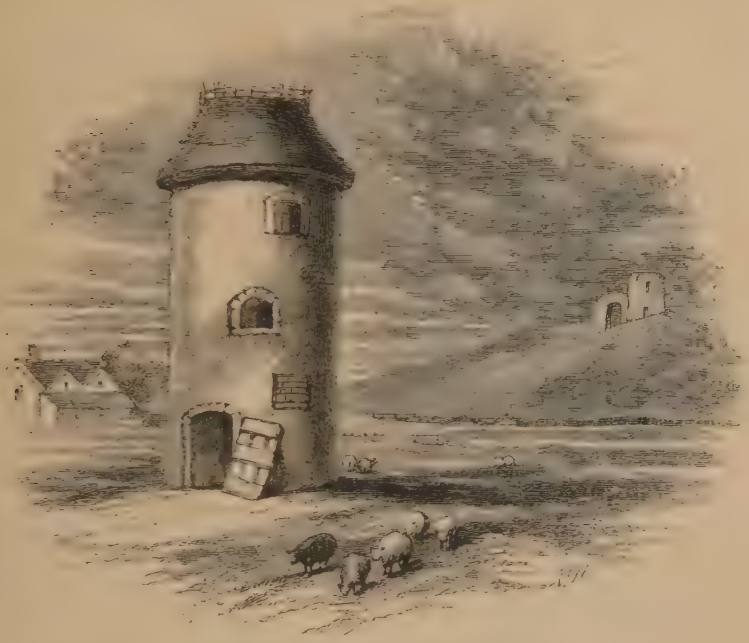
Brindley, for two or three previous years at least, had been making use of these improvements in several directions. In May 1756 he is at work at Mr. Warburton's flint-mill at Bucknall, and in March 1757 he is engaged in constructing a new flint-mill for Mr. Baddeley, at a place called Machin's of the Mill, near Tunstall. In the spring of the succeeding year he is employed in the same manner for a Mr. Tibots, living near 'Mr. Grifis Now Inn.' His work seems to have been that of direction and supervision only, as he was at this time called a thousand ways by the business of the Duke of Bridgewater's canal. He begins the mill in May, and allows himself two days to set out the plan. After this he is absent till the 22nd of the month, when he is again present 'a bout the foundacion ½ day.' 'June 1, a bout the Breek work 1 day.' 'July 1, a bout the paann ½ day.' 'July 18, a bout the finishing part 1½ day.' 'August 6, a bout to finishing ½ day.'[2]

This was undoubtedly the method he followed in respect to the windmill on the Jenkins. Its construction involved some peculiarities, as within its walls a well was

[1] See ante, pp. 150–2.

[2] Brindley's Memorandum Book. Mayer Collection.

sunk for the supply of water to the grinding-vats; and its sails and gearing were unusually large and powerful. On the first day the mill was set in motion, to the consternation of everybody, and most so of the engineer, the sails were blown off during a high wind. But Brindley was not one of those to be disheartened by small mischances. He



(Fig. 64.) BRINDLEY'S FLINT-MILL AT THE PRESENT DAY.

probably entered in his memorandum book 'bad louck,' as was his custom when mischance befell; and at once set to, to repair the mischief done. At length one of the most valuable mills of that day in or about Burslem was completed, and the Messrs. Wedgwood were owners of a property which preserved its utility long after they had passed away.

We have already said that they were admirable masters

of their art. Prior to the advent of their young kinsman, they had done much to improve various descriptions of ware; especially white stoneware, in which they led the export trade of the district. Their unglazed specimens were excellent; and they were the first who by experiment ascertained the various qualities of the clays found in their neighbourhood. To them, as already seen, is due the introduction of pyrometrical beads, as tests in firing; and they had gradually learnt, by mischances in their own pot-work, the necessity of using only water which was free from the soluble bicarbonate of lime. Hence they had long disused all water taken from near 'shord-rucks,' or heaps of broken seggars and pots, as necessarily containing, in those days of salt-glazed ware, much salt in solution. They would only use water from a well of very great depth, near their pot-work; and which, known as 'Hankerses,' penetrated far beneath the limestone and coal-measures of the district. The same rule was followed in respect to the well which was sunk under Brindley's direction in their new flint-mill.

At this date John and Thomas Wedgwood of the Big House were both bachelors of the respective ages of fifty-five and fifty-three. Like their friend the engineer, they had led necessarily such lives of incessant industry, in bringing forward many improvements and in opening out their great trade, as to have had little time to form domestic ties. Their house had been kept by a maiden sister, named Mary, who dying about this time, the younger brother married, and a family grew around him. But, alike in the days of married as in those of bachelor life, the then famous red-brick house of Burslem was a very hospitable place; and amongst the guests who occasionally came there was their brother, Mr. Richard

Wedgwood, of Spen Green in Cheshire. He had, as already stated, made a large fortune as a cheese-factor; and now, retired from business, led the simple life of a country gentleman. His wife had been long dead, but he had children, a son and a daughter. To the young lady he had given an education far above the average of that then accorded to women. She wrote and spelt well; she had a keen and accurate judgment which under after-cultivation rose in its degree; and there is that in her countenance, as preserved to us in the cameos, which indicates a great natural sense of beauty and form. The long thread of artistic cultivation, through the line of her forefathers, had left its traces here, and with very pregnant results, as we shall see. Sarah Wedgwood was one of those happily constituted women who can rise equal to superior fortune if it come, and yet lose sight of no utility necessary to its beginning. She was an admirable housewife; could make wine and confections, and spin flax with any of her neighbours. The days were close at hand when, happily, the spinning-wheel was to be dismissed to the lumber-room, and better employment assigned to her, by him who was to rule her life;[1] but at present she presided over her father's house. He was devotedly attached to her; and the pleasant tradition is that when he came riding in fine weather to Burslem, to see his brothers at the Big House, Sarah would sit on a pillion behind him, whilst the old serving-man followed on a farm-horse. Once in her uncles' house, the young potter who was working so near at hand in laying the foundation, to him as yet unconsciously, of an imperishable fame, was sure, when a leisure hour afforded time, to be a guest; and thus an

[1] Supra, p. 365.

attachment grew up between the distant cousins, whose great-grandfathers on the paternal side had been sons of that Gilbert Wedgwood who just a century and a half before had married the rich co-heiress of Thomas Burslem. Then there came Christmas junketings, and harvest and haymaking feasts, when, for once in a way, the young potter left his experiments, his models, his lathes, and his ovens, and, mounting his favourite horse Taffy, took the ten-mile road to the farmhouse at Spen Green.

To show how much affinities run through a race, Richard Wedgwood was in character not unlike his great son-in-law—a kindly, thoughtful, far-seeing man, a little over-careful perhaps; but he had carved out his own fortunes by dint of industry, thrift, and sobriety, and he valued these qualities so much in others as to regulate many of the bequests in his will with exact accordance thereto. Those to whom he left legacies of 20*l.*, upon proving that they had accumulated by thrift and industry a like sum, were to have them doubled; and to those of his relations by whom such assistance was needed he left annuities.[1] He seems to have been a trusted relative and friend of Mrs. Egerton, as she made him legatee of one of her most treasured heirlooms, the silver drinking-cup which had belonged to her father, Richard Wedgwood.[2]

[1] This information is from Mr. Aaron Wedgwood of Burslem, to whose grandfather (Aaron Wedgwood) Mr. Richard Wedgwood of Spen Green left an annuity of 20*l.* per annum.

[2] 'I give to my kinsman Richard Wedgwood of Spen Green my silver cup lettered R. W. . . . To the same Richard my beaufet in the parlour, my long table in the hall, my grate and grid and sways in the house, and my grate in the best parlour.' Extract from the will of Catherine Egerton, made the 3rd day of December 1755, and proved in the following year by her two executors, John Henshall of New-Chapel, and Thomas Wedgwood of Burslem. Preserved in the Registry of Lichfield.

The last items in the bequest afford curious evidence of the comparative scarcity and value yet attached to articles of wrought iron.

By the close of the year 1761 Mr. Wedgwood had brought his cream-ware to a considerable degree of perfection. The body had a lightness hitherto unknown, the glaze an exquisite brilliancy, and its forms were entirely new. The proportion of native clay introduced into the body was probably but fractional. Dorset and Devon clays with a due proportion of flint were its chief components, and the glaze used was what was known as 'Greatbach's china glaze,' but which Mr. Wedgwood subsequently greatly improved. Amongst its ingredients were red or white lead—lead entering into all the glazes of the period under one form or another—flint glass, tin, and Isle of Wight sand.[1]

The forms of the chief pieces, such as compotiers, tureens, sauce-boats, and salt-cellers, were principally modelled from natural objects, as shells, leaves, and the husks and seed-valves of plants. In his occasional journeys from home, Mr. Wedgwood lost no opportunity of seeking out, in shops and noted collections, for such specimens of Oriental and Dresden ware as might furnish him with new ideas as to form, colour, and manipulative skill, even if he could not obtain the privilege of modelling therefrom. And so far as he yet resorted to enamelling, the softest and most subdued colours were employed. The annexed cup and saucer from the Museum of Practical Geology Collection, show the simple means by which he produced his best effects. They are painted with autumnal leaves, and edged with red lines; and he is ever thus recurring to nature, and making her simplicity

[1] In the second edition of 'The Handmaid of the Arts,' which appeared in 1764, is first given a section on the manufacture of porcelain and pottery. This book, which Mr. Wedgwood refers to in his correspondence with Bentley, has few other than the old formulas of Dutch glazes. One, however, has a felspathic admixture in the shape of granite.

subservient to the highest effects. Such a new art, as it were, graceful, simple, and beautiful, because its forms were geometrically perfect, found for its specimens, though

(Fig. 65.) TEACUP AND SAUCER, AUTUMNAL LEAVES.—COLLECTION IN MUSEUM OF PRACTICAL GEOLOGY.

as yet comparatively few in number, ready purchasers. They seem to have been sent to London, and there consigned to the hands of the export merchant. On a medium such as this, the distant manufacturer could rely at that day, with more positive certainty for the disposal of his goods, than on the home retailer; and to this perhaps we are indebted, more than to time and accident, for the preservation of specimens of this early period of Mr. Wedgwood's labours.

In thus opening his export and retail business in London, Mr. Wedgwood was greatly indebted to his brother John, who, nine years his senior, had for a considerable period held some lucrative post, probably under Government. Latterly his health had failed him, and he had quitted it; but being a bachelor, and in easy circumstances, he still resided in London; mixed in the best artistic and literary society of the day, and was ready, when opportunity should occur, to take office

anew, were the duties comparatively light, and the remuneration adequate. For some such opening as this he appears to have been on the look-out; and in the interval he employed himself very zealously in his brother's affairs. They were tenderly attached; the joy and grief of the one were those of the other; and but one hand served, and one heart beat in their manly and fraternal breasts.

Mr. John Wedgwood lodged at the sign of the Artichoke in Cateaton Street, near Guildhall, then as now a busy part of the city; and here it was that Josiah Wedgwood addressed his letters when he had to commission him to seek out a modeller or an engraver, pay a visit to Bow China Works, buy gold or enamel colours, secure some good workman, or make his bow to a connoisseur or great man who had works of art or drawings to lend. All the more mechanical appliances useful in his art occupied at this period a very large share of Mr. Wedgwood's thought and experimental skill. The lathe as used by the potters before his time, was most primitive in its construction and effects; its use being chiefly confined to paring and smoothing down inequalities of surface, to a few eccentric movements as regarded mouldings and edges, and to a few decorative effects of the simplest kind. But the great master, with the patient and prescient eye of genius, saw in this primitive machine the means to extraordinary results. He was probably confirmed in this opinion by his friend Mr. John Taylor of Birmingham, whose acquaintance he made about this time. Taylor in his way was an extraordinary man. By his taste, skill, and energy, he was at this date effecting a revolution in the small-ware branch of manufactures, such as buckles, buttons, and various light

ornamental articles. His machinery, much of which he had invented, or had adapted to his own processes from other trades, was of a most novel character; and seeking, as he seems to have done, information relating thereto at every source, he was probably the one who introduced to Wedgwood's notice Plumier's remarkable book 'L'Art de Tourner,' of which so much was to come when the great friend of his life appeared upon the scene; and Wedgwood had a congenial spirit, in whom to confide, and with whom to discuss the knotty points of alteration and experimental detail.

A greater man than even John Taylor became at this date known to Mr. Wedgwood. This was Matthew Boulton, who just then was negotiating the lease of Soho, two miles from Birmingham, with the original lessees Messrs. Ruston and Evans. The latter, who held a ninety-nine years' lease of John Wyrley, Lord of the Manor of Handsworth, had entered upon the occupation of Soho in 1757, when it was a mere hilly barren waste tenanted only by rabbits, and by a warrener whose hut stood upon the highest ground. By a cut these first lessees had turned Hockley Brook, and formed a pool for a water-mill they built for rolling metal; but which passing with the land into Mr. Boulton's possession, was made available for manufacturing purposes on a much larger scale. The foundations of the great works at Soho were not laid till 1764. Prior to this date, Mr. Boulton's manufacturing concerns had steadily increased. His new method of inlaying steel had proved a great success; and for the productions of his manufactory, generally considered, there was a growing demand. These were principally exported to the Continent, and not uncommonly reimported for domestic use as of foreign manufacture.

At this time likewise an art was making its way in Liverpool, of which, as applied to the decoration of his improved cream-ware, Mr. Wedgwood was soon to find the great utility. This was the application to glazed earthenware of impressions taken upon paper from engraved copper-plates; the ware after printing being passed through the muffle or enamelling oven to fix the colours. The discovery of this art had been made in 1752, or indeed previously, by Mr. John Sadler, a master printer of Liverpool, who, from observing some children stick waste prints, which he had given to them, upon broken pieces of earthenware they had brought from the pot-works near at hand, had conceived the idea of this new application of the printer's art. For a time he occupied himself with experiments in which, after many fruitless trials, he succeeded. When his invention was thus nearly perfect, he communicated it to his friend Mr. Guy Green, who, likewise a printer, had served his apprenticeship to Mr. Sadler's father, and had now succeeded him in his business. From this time the friends conducted their experiments together; and entering into partnership, they determined to apply to the King for a patent. With this intent they procured all the necessary certificates and other papers to show their claim to the invention; but ultimately they were dissuaded from taking this step by their friends, who not only considered the expense, delay, and publicity connected therewith, but were also certain that, with ordinary prudence, their secret could be safe for a period at least, and that they had thus little to fear from opposition.[1] They therefore lost no time in suing patrons, or in loitering about law courts; but,

[1] History of the Art of Pottery in Liverpool, by Joseph Mayer, F.S.A., p.10. Printed in Memoirs of the Historic Society of Lancashire, vol. vii.

taking heartily to their new trade, prosecuted it with the utmost zeal. They printed plaques, tiles, mugs, teapots, and other earthenware for ordinary domestic use; and used various colours, but more generally cobalt blue in imitation of Delft ware; the great object being to undersell the Dutch, who at this date imported tiles in vast quantities into the country for the purpose of ornamenting fire-places. That this admirable discovery was likely to effect a perfect revolution in cheapening articles of ordinary earthenware was proved by the fact that the partners 'within the space of six hours printed upwards of twelve hundred earthenware tiles of different colours and patterns, which, upon a moderate computation, was more than one hundred good workmen could have done of the same patterns in the same space of time by the usual way of painting with the pencil.'[1]

There was abundant material near at hand on which to apply Mr. Sadler's discovery; for, with the exception of the Staffordshire Potteries, Liverpool at this period carried on the manufacture of earthenware on a larger scale than any other place in the kingdom. There were at least eleven pot-works in active operation, and the goods produced were chiefly for export to the West Indies, to the coast of Africa, and the British possessions in North America. But the fame of Wedgwood's great improvements in the body of ware soon led Mr. Chaffers, already one of the most eminent potters, to see that the days of the art in Liverpool were numbered, unless efforts were made to advance in the same direction. He turned his attention to the production of china; and as steatite or soap-stone was one of the ingredients necessary to its

[1] Affidavit taken by Alderman Thomas Shaw and Samuel Gilbody, master-potters, in behalf of John Sadler and Guy Green. Mayer MSS.

improved manufacture, he made a purpose journey into Cornwall, at much personal risk and expense, to seek for a vein which might be worked for the purposes of his manufactory, as those discovered by Cookworthy were already monopolised. After many difficulties and disappointments he succeeded in the object of his journey; and the eventual result was the production of a beautiful ware, which in many instances rivalled Oriental china in its shell-like thinness, its compact solidity of body, its smoothness of glaze, and the deep richness of its brilliant colours.

The earliest reference to pottery in Liverpool is found in the list of town dues payable at the port in 1674. It then seems to have been an object of considerable export, cups, pipes, and mugs being amongst the articles exported; and it had probably been long manufactured on the same spot. In those days of almost impossible internal intercourse, every town and almost every village had its potwork for coarse ware, more particularly if it lay upon the coast or upon the banks of a river, whereby the transmission of necessary materials was insured. We may also infer from the speciality of the ware manufactured, that Liverpool, like other English towns, owed much to the settlement of Dutch potters at the close of the sixteenth or the early part of the seventeenth century. At least all the ordinary ware manufactured was of the Dutch type, alike as to body, glaze, and colouring. Amongst the articles of this speciality 'were very large round dishes, which were chiefly sent into Wales, where the simple habits of the people remained unchanged long after their alteration in England, and the master of the house and his guests dipped their spoons into the mess and helped themselves from the dish placed in the middle

of the table. Quantities of this ware were sent to the great border fairs held at Chester,[1] where the inhabitants of the more remote and inaccessible parts of the mountain districts of Wales assembled to buy their stores for the year. This continued until a very recent time, when, in consequence of the formation of good roads and the introduction of railways, the business of the great fair held in the border city of the two countries has materially diminished.'[2]

From the date of his commencing business for himself Mr. Wedgwood was in the habit of making frequent visits to Liverpool; always riding there on horseback and sleeping a night on the road, either at Knutsford or Warrington. Many necessary duties drew him there. He had cargoes of clay to see after; on specimens of some of which he had already experimentalised, as they came from foreign and distant sources. He had to purchase cobalt, hire workmen, arrange his export business; and now that Green and Sadler had commenced business as printers of earthenware in Harrington Street, he had to settle many things as to the decoration of his own most beautiful productions in cream-ware. Yet beyond this business relation with merchants and others he seems to have been at first an entire stranger in the town; settling what concerned him as quickly as a busy man required, and then returning on his homeward journey to his own work-rooms, wherein he was becoming so potent a master, and to those quiet domestic joys and incidents which were shortly to open up to him one of the two influences which, throughout his subsequent noble career of self-help and laborious industry, were a strength and a stay such as few men

[1] They also reached Shrewsbury, Knighton, and other large border towns.

[2] History of the Art of Pottery in Liverpool, by Joseph Mayer, F.S.A., p. 26.

have the good fortune to own. Still, Liverpool as it was at that day—a pleasant country town, with fields and gorse-clad uplands lying round it; with enough of its old pool remaining with foot-bridges and by-paths to give a touch of the romantic; with its streets, though comparatively few in number, filled with a busy and exceedingly thriving population; with its noble river, and its lovely seaward views—must have formed a whole most refreshing for him to move amongst, after the comparative seclusion and dulness of the Pottery villages.

The future great seaport of the Mersey covered then a comparatively small area. For some years after Wedgwood's first visits to it, it only extended on the north a few yards beyond St. Paul's Church; on the west the river washed its banks, and on its margin were three docks—the dry pier, the old dock, and the south dock. The town on the south extended to the Wesleyan chapel in Pitt Street parallel to the road to Toxteth Park, which was bounded by hedges. Westenholm Square was a suburb; and also the Ranelagh Gardens on the site of the present Adelphi Hotel, which was the boundary in that direction. The Infirmary, on the site of St. George's Hall, was out of town. At the foot of Shaw's Brow, then covered with pot-works, commenced Town's End Lane, now Byrom Street, from which at the end of a few fields a road branched off to Everton, and on the opposite side another to Tithebarn Street, which was only partially built up on the north side. Here was St. Paul's Church again, and the circuit was complete.[1] In the middle of the sixteenth century it was a mere fishing village; and in 1618 it possessed but twenty-four vessels of the

[1] Gleanings from Old Liverpool Newspapers a Hundred Years Ago, by J. A. Picton, F.S.A.; Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, vol. vi. p. 112.

aggregate burden of 462 tons, navigated by seventy-six men. Eight years later it contributed but 25*l.* to the impost of ship-money, whilst the sum of 1,000*l.* was paid by the people of Bristol. In 1651 it contained about 2,000 inhabitants; and small craft were built in the town as high up as Frog Lane—now Whitechapel. The town did not then extend beyond this lane and Common Shore—now known as Paradise Street.[1] In 1699 the first dock was made; and the year after the population had increased to 7,715. In 1766 the augmentation had reached the point of 25,787; a vast increase having taken place during the previous fourteen years — an increase said to be in some measure due to the traffic in slaves, which had sprung up in the interval, and was carried on largely by the merchants.[2] It was also in some degree referable to the cotton trade; the cotton wool imported into Liverpool, chiefly from the Levant and Turkey, having increased from 2,976,610 lbs. in 1751 to 3,870,392 lbs. in 1764; and the cotton goods exported at the respective dates had risen in value from 45,986*l.* to 200,354*l.* The foreign and colonial trade was almost exclusively confined to the West Indies and North America, and the tonnage was usually small. The coasting and Irish trades employed a large number of small craft; and in the salt, coal, and river trades about eighty small sloops kept up the communication with Manchester and Warrington by the Mersey and Irwell river navigation; with the salt districts of Cheshire by the Weaver navigation, and with the coal-field of Wigan by the river Douglas. Prior to 1760 there did not exist a road decently fit for wheel-carriages nearer than War-

[1] Baines's History of Lancaster, vol. iv. p. 80.

[2] Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire, vol. viii. p. 23.

rington. Persons visiting the metropolis had to ride on horseback to Warrington, and thence take the stage which had been set up in 1757. But from 1760 improvement began; and in 1766 two coaches went direct from Liverpool to London.

The town was then, as now, principally dependent upon its shipping and commerce; not, however, so extensively as at the present time. Many of the inhabitants were persons of independent means, who had probably selected it as their place of abode by reason of its pleasant rural site and contiguity to the sea. Thus the proportion of respectable houses was much greater than at present. The merchant had usually his establishment complete on the spot where he resided, and to this was usually attached a garden. There was a weekly newspaper; the nucleus of a public library, which in this day has the proud distinction of being the first public circulating library established not only in England but in Europe. There were bowling-greens, good inns, a theatre, and a public garden called Ranelagh, after that in the metropolis. It contained a pond with numberless fish which the ladies were delighted to feed. There were borders full of shrubs and choice flowers, and occasionally concerts were held. Liverpool had also two public walks of great beauty. That to the north, called the Ladies' Walk, possessed an avenue of stately trees, and commanded a fine view seaward. There was much hospitality, much social kindness, and neighbourly intercourse. Occasionally there was a commotion in the town when a pressgang made its appearance, a privateer was reported, or an election on hand; but otherwise the daily life of its inhabitants seems, from all which has been handed down to us, very enjoyable, picturesque, and simple. Mr. Derrick, Master of

the Ceremonies at Bath, has recorded for our benefit that many of the ladies were well dressed and well bred, but his opinion is somewhat less favourable as to the capacity and literary attainments of their husbands and brothers. 'Though few of the merchants,' he says, 'have had more education than befits a counting-house, they are genteel in their address. They are hospitable, very friendly to strangers, even those of whom they have the least knowledge. Their tables are plenteously furnished, and their viands well served up. Their rum is excellent, of which they consume large quantities in punch, made when the West India fleets come in, mostly with limes which are very cooling, and afford a delicious flavour. But they pique themselves greatly on their ale, of which almost every house brews a sufficiency for its own use; and such is the unanimity prevailing amongst them, that if by accident one man's stock runs short he sends his pitcher to his neighbour to be filled.'[1]

In spite of Mr. Derrick's opinion, there were at that date in Liverpool merchants and professional men capable of a far higher degree of mental exertion than would be necessary to keep a ledger, write a bill of lading, or pass judgment on ale or punch, even though compounded with 'cooling limes.'

[1] Letters to the Earl of Cork, by Samuel Derrick, 1767, p. 15.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

MR. WEDGWOOD'S ACCIDENT ON HIS JOURNEY TO LIVERPOOL—HIS CONFINEMENT THERE—IS ATTENDED BY MR. MATTHEW TURNER, THE EMINENT SURGEON, WHO INTRODUCES TO HIM THE GREAT FRIEND OF HIS LIFE, THOMAS BENTLEY, THE LIVERPOOL MERCHANT—BENTLEY A DERBYSHIRE MAN—HIS EARLY HISTORY—HIS MARRIAGE AND SETTLEMENT IN LIVERPOOL AS A MANCHESTER WAREHOUSEMAN—ASSISTS IN FOUNDING WARRINGTON ACADEMY—SOCIETY THERE AND IN LIVERPOOL—WEDGWOOD'S FIRST LETTER TO BENTLEY—THE OCTAGON CHAPEL—DR. PRIESTLEY—HIS PREVIOUS ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE REV. WILLIAM WILLET, MR. WEDGWOOD'S BROTHER-IN-LAW—MISS AIKIN, AFTERWARDS MRS. BARBAULD—HER GENIUS—MR. WEDGWOOD IN LONDON—THE CIDER TAX—LORD BUTE'S RESIGNATION—TRADE WITH IRELAND—MRS. BYERLEY—HER SON TOM, A FAVOURITE WITH HIS UNCLES—HIS BOYISH FREAKS—THE IVY-HOUSE AND BRICK-HOUSE WORKS—INTERESTING ASSOCIATIONS CONNECTED THEREWITH—HIS MARRIAGE—ASTBURY CHURCH—THE INTRODUCTION OF THE ENGINE-LATHE—ITS HISTORY—PLUMIER'S ADMIRABLE WORK, 'L'ART DE TOURNER'—ITS FIRST APPLICATION TO 'RED CHINA' TEA AND COFFEE POTS.

CHAPTER VIII.

THOMAS BENTLEY THE LIVERPOOL MERCHANT.

FOR some few months prior to the spring of 1762 Mr. Wedgwood again suffered from the disorder in his knee; and there were symptoms of the joint stiffening. His skilful surgeon, Mr. Bent of Newcastle, was as usual called in, and some relief ensued. But it was unfortunately temporary in its effects; for being obliged to make one of his customary journeys to Liverpool, he hurt it by the way, either through the stumbling of his horse, or by grazing it against a passing wheel in one of the narrow lanes peculiar to the district. This occurred on the Cheshire side of Warrington. On reaching Liverpool, on the following day, he had at once to be assisted upstairs to bed. As hitherto in previous attacks, the inflammation spread; and taking counsel with the landlady of the inn, which seems to have been either the Fleece or the Golden Lion in Dale Street, as to a surgeon of good repute, she recommended to Mr. Wedgwood's notice Mr. Matthew Turner—a man of eminent skill—living hard by in John Street. The surgeon paid his visit, and, becoming interested in the stranger, paid great attention to his case, for it was one of danger. Losing no time, and sparing no pains, he had the great satisfaction of speedily reducing the inflammation, and checking the other dangerous

symptoms which had supervened. The leg, however, remained painfully affected; the wound in the shin-bone was slow to heal; so that there was no alternative left but that Mr. Wedgwood should bear the necessary confinement as patiently as he could; though business in the meanwhile was standing still, and countless duties were left unfulfilled. With that generous regard to others' feelings so characteristic of his kindly and unselfish nature, Mr. Wedgwood must have made light of his sufferings and confinement to his distant friends; or there were those amongst them who would have instantly hastened to his side. His brothers Thomas or John, or his kindly relatives in Newcastle, Mr. and Mrs. Willet, Mr. Wedgwood's mother, who was yet alive, and resided still at the Churchyard house, and her widowed daughter Mrs. Byerley, must have wondered too at his unusual absence; but as soon as his state permitted, he wrote and disarmed their worst fears. There was one more anxious still—his 'dear girl,' his 'loving Sally,' in the quiet farmhouse at Spen Green; but the postman from Congleton often brought her a letter, and so she consoled herself with looking forward to 'Jos's' return.

Mr. Matthew Turner—for he became Dr. Turner at a subsequent period—was a man of unusual attainments. A good surgeon, a skilful anatomist, a practised chemist, a draughtsman, a classical scholar, and a ready wit, he formed one of a group of eminently intellectual men who, at that date and later, did so much to foster a literary and artistic taste amongst the more educated classes of Liverpool. He was one of the founders in 1769 of the Liverpool Academy of Art; and in that year, as afterwards upon the two revivals of the Academy in 1773

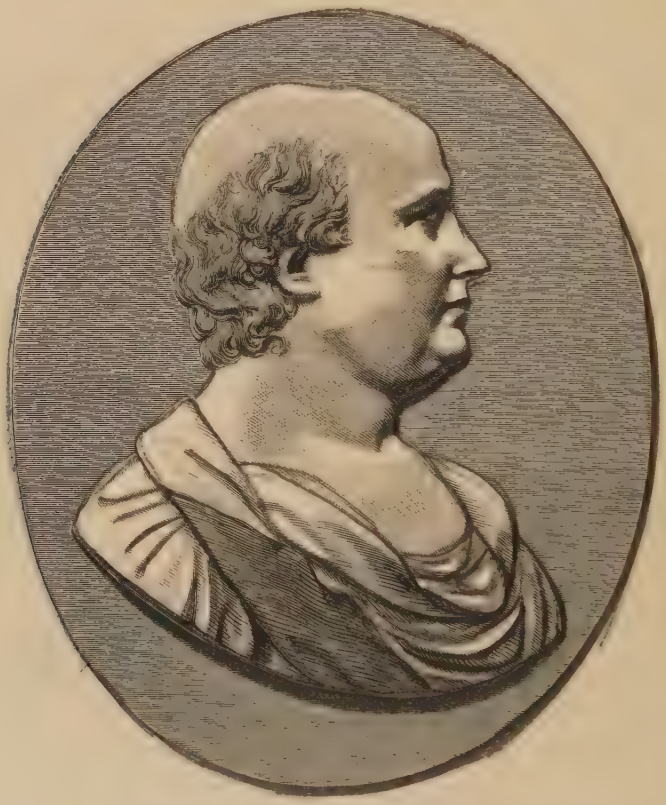
and 1783, he delivered various admirable lectures upon anatomy and the theory of forms.[1]

The intercourse between surgeon and patient in the daily quietude of the sick-chamber seems to have been of a most friendly and pleasant character. Turner was a good chemist, and Wedgwood, so far as his art was concerned, a profound one; and the subject of chemistry appears from the results to have formed part of their ordinary conversation, as Mr. Turner a while after supplied Mr. Wedgwood with several receipts for varnishes and other appliances of great utility in his manufacture.[2] There were naturally other topics of conversation, interesting to men of their capacity—men who were citizens and patriots enough to take vital interest in the social and political questions of the day. But the surgeon had a large practice, and little time to spare. Much as he pitied the loneliness of the sick stranger, it was impossible for him to lengthen his professional visits to such an extent as would lessen the tedium of his patient's weary hours. Mr. Turner brought or sent books; Mr. Wedgwood had such newspapers to read as then slowly made their way from the metropolis to the provincial towns; and yet, with even these appliances, the good doctor plainly saw that a little social intercourse would be more than medicine to the sick man. He made no comment, but that same day he entered the room again: this time accompanied by a handsome, well-dressed man, of most attractive manners and courtly air. The stranger had heard of Mr. Wedgwood. Mr. Turner's encomiums added to his interest; and the appearances begot by rigorous confinement and sickness still more. He came forward with his gallant

[1] Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, vol. v. p. 140, vol. vi. pp. 71, 72.

[2] Supra.

bow and courtly manner, took the kindly proffered hand, looked into the good and strongly expressive face of the Staffordshire potter; and from this moment, this place of meeting in the Liverpool inn, these men were more than brothers. Friendship is hardly the word for



(Fig. 66.) CAMEO MEDALLION OF THOMAS BENTLEY.—MAYER COLLECTION.

the zeal, kindliness, truth, unselfishness, inflexible justice, with which one served the other. It was a memorable meeting, a memorable friendship, both for themselves, their country, and the arts they loved. These men, henceforth the dearest friends, were Josiah Wedgwood and Thomas Bentley.

Mr. Bentley was a native of Derbyshire, having been born at Scrapton—a little thinly populated village, beautifully situated on the banks of the river Dove, about 11½ miles west-south-west of Derby—on January 1, 1730.[1] He was thus six months older than Wedgwood. His father seems to have been a country gentleman of some property; and unlike his brothers, several of whom were clergymen of the Established Church, and officiated in churches of the district, had seceded, and become a member of one of the most liberal sections of dissent.[2] After a childhood spent amidst the beautiful scenery of the river Dove, for which he always retained a passionate admiration,[3] young Bentley was placed at a large collegiate academy

[1] Owing probably to his parents being dissenters, Thomas Bentley was not baptised till he was six years old. 'Thomas, son of Thomas Bentley, baptised February 18, 1736.'—Extract from the Baptismal Register of Scrapton, Derbyshire.

[2] There is not the least foundation for the hackneyed assertion that Thomas Bentley was the son of Richard Bentley, the famous critic, as also Archdeacon of Ely and Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. They were probably in no way related; although the latter had a nephew named Thomas, who added notes to a valuable edition of Horace, published by his uncle in 1713. He also published 'Cicero de Finibus,' and an edition of Callimachus for schools. He was much engaged in the classical and other controversies of the time, and was really what he was styled, 'an awkward imitator of his great uncle.' (See Nichols's Literary Anecdotes, vol. iv. p. 491; Monk's Life of Richard Bentley, Archdeacon of Ely.) Richard Bentley, the critic, was born at Wakefield, in Yorkshire, in 1662, and was thus sixty-nine years old when Thomas Bentley (Mr. Wedgwood's famous partner) was born. The line of Bentleys from whom the latter sprang seem to have been settled in Derbyshire for generations, and, principally occupied in farming, became in process of time widely scattered over a large district, which included Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and parts of Staffordshire. Like the Wedgwoods, they took their patronymic from a small rural hamlet. Several of them were settled in Uttoxeter, and one, whose Christian name was Samuel, was a poet in a small way. In 1768 he published, by subscription—amongst the subscribers were several of the name of Bentley, but not the Liverpool merchant—a quarto volume entitled 'The River Dove, a Lyric Pastoral;' and in 1774, 'Poems on several Occasions, consisting of Original Pieces and Translations.' The contents of both volumes did not deserve printing. The verses on the Dove — a river of such exquisite beauty as to have been a worthy theme for a true poet like Wordsworth—are a wretched imitation of Shenstone's Pastorals. The translations are the best, and prove Samuel Bentley to have been a fair scholar, though no poet.

[3] Wedgwood Correspondence, supra.

at Findern [1] near Derby, belonging to the Presbyterians, and which, prior to the foundation of that at Warrington in 1757, shared with the academy at Kendal the patronage of the dissenters. Here he seems to have acquired a very fair amount of classical learning, considering that he was removed thence when not more than fifteen or sixteen years of age, and placed by his father or other relations in a warehouse in Manchester, there to learn the processes of the woollen and cotton trades—the latter term being then applied to fabrics chiefly made of linen thread—and the general business of a merchant. Gentlemen's sons were often thus apprenticed. The foolish notion that to pursue a trade was degrading—a relic of feudalism—had been dying out ever since the period of the Commonwealth; and at the close of the seventeenth century, it began to be seen by the more educated portion of the community that the commercial progress of the country was opening up some of the finest sources of lucrative employment to the young. At first the treatment of these apprentices by the Manchester manufacturers appears to have been of a very sorry description; but as capital increased, and the moral tone of society improved, their condition was ameliorated; and merchants' apprentices moved henceforth on a more equable footing with their masters. 'A back parlour with a fire,' says Aikin, 'was now allotted to their use, and they were allowed tea twice a day,' [2] though the apprentice-fees were in consequence greatly raised.

Upon the expiration of his apprenticeship, young Bentley appears to have visited the Continent and to have passed some time there, either on his own account, or on

[1] Wedgwood Correspondence, supra.

[2] Forty Miles round Manchester, p. 184.

that of a manufacturing firm. Here he acquired an excellent knowledge of the French and Italian languages, both of which he subsequently spoke with great fluency; and there can be little doubt that during his stay in Italy he laid the foundation of his admirable knowledge of antique art. Soon after his return home, and whilst yet only twenty-four years of age—namely, in 1754—he married Miss Hannah Oates of Sheffield. He then settled in Liverpool; and here we find him in 1757 engaged as a Manchester warehouseman, with a place of business in King Street, and a private residence in the then fashionable locality of Paradise Street. Eventually he took Mr. James Boardman as his partner, and thenceforth the firm was known as that of Bentley and Boardman.[1]

Within a period of two years, his wife died in childbed, and her infant soon after; but Miss Oates, an elder sister, took charge of Mr. Bentley's household and received his guests. A niece seems also to have occasionally resided with them. His house was large and commodious, and here he entertained his numerous friends with the utmost hospitality; it being a centre round which radiated much of the best intellect of Liverpool and its neighbourhood. He took great interest in all the questions of the day. Not a public or private measure that affected the well-being of the town, or the country at large, failed to find in him a warm and distinguished advocate.

The first glimpse which we get of Mr. Bentley in this public capacity is in relation to the preliminary business connected with the founding of Warrington Academy in 1757. He was, in connection with Arthur and Benjamin

[1] It appears in Gore's first Liverpool Directory, published in 1766.

Heywood, Dr. Angier, Richard Savage, Thomas Wharton, and James Percival, one of the Trustees, who represented the interests of the liberal dissenters of Liverpool. There

(Fig. 67.) THE WARRINGTON ACADEMY.—1757.

had been much previous controversy as to the locality to be fixed upon for the new Academy; some advocating Ormskirk, some Manchester, and others Warrington. There was modification of proposals, and settlement at length; and the plan originating with the Rev. John Seddon of Warrington was the one adhered to. He was a young man, but he shaped out what had been for some time an anxious cause for thought with the more liberal of dissenters, as to an institution where their future ministers might receive the highest kind of education without reference to peculiarities of creed. Warrington was thus fixed upon; a range of buildings for the use of the Academy was taken on the Lancashire side of the bridge

across the Mersey, and three tutors engaged—the celebrated Dr. Taylor of Norwich, Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Aikin of Kibworth, and Mr. Holt of Kirkdale. Thus commenced this most famous Academy; the central spot for years of liberal politics, literary taste, and philosophical discussion.

The house first occupied by the Academy, in spite of the immortality conferred upon it by Mrs. Barbauld in her poem of the 'Invitation,' was, as shown, a dingy, old, red-bricked building, with its side to the river, and a garden with a summer-house behind. More suitable buildings were erected in 1762 in another part of the town. But prior to this Dr. Taylor had died; Dr. Aikin had taken his place as Theological Tutor; and Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Priestley had succeeded the latter as Tutor of Languages and Polite Literature.

Meanwhile the friendship which followed upon Mr. Turner's kindly introduction, ripened day by day. Mr. Bentley was unceasing in his efforts to cheer the solitary stranger; and such delicacies as Miss Oates could provide found their way to the Dale Street inn. The friends smoked their pipes together, and over them discussed every conceivable topic, as the result proved—religion, politics, commerce, canal navigation, art, pottery, chemistry, lathe-turning, logic, and even poetry. Bentley was an ardent admirer of the poet Thomson. He culled lines from his poems, as we gather flowers in a luxuriant garden. The first true poet of the eighteenth century, who, trusting to Nature, forgot conventional themes and classical models, had won his ear completely. He admired the 'Seasons,' he revelled in the picturesque beauty of the 'Castle of Indolence;' but most of all he loved the five cantos of 'Liberty' which we in our day, with so many

nobler poems to call ours, think justly very turgid and inflated, and smile at some of its dreams, for we have only too sadly seen their fallacy! Yet here he found the motto for his subsequent admirable pamphlet on 'Canal Navigation.' In more confidential moments he even confessed to authorship, and read to his friend Wedgwood an unpublished Essay on Female Education.

As soon as Mr. Wedgwood could get abroad on stick or crutch, he repaired to his friend's house; and the circle of his acquaintance widened. Here he met Priestley, Seddon, probably Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Aikin, the Heywoods, the Percivals, John and Charles Eyes—the former an attorney to whom at a subsequent date the illustrious Roscoe was articled, the latter an architect and surveyor who, with the Messrs. Taylor of Manchester, had made the survey of the Trent and Mersey Canal in 1755 at the expense of the Liverpool corporation—Caddick and Chubbard, who were both well-known portrait-painters, Mr. Joseph Deare (uncle of the afterwards celebrated John Deare the sculptor who died at Rome), Pennington, Burdett, and other artists and engravers.[1] Another very intimate friend of Bentley's was Mr. John Wyke, the well-known watchmaker, so famous for watch tools and instruments for the cutting of toothed wheels, and for the motion work, chains, mainsprings, and pinion wire of watches and clocks. He was the first to introduce into Liverpool, in 1758, the various branches of the watch business on a large scale, from the little town of Prescot of which he was a native; and being so admirable a mechanist, and withal a most intelligent man, his society was as instructive as pleasant to Mr.

[1] Transactions of Historic Society of Lancashire, vol. vi. pp. 71, 72.

Wedgwood, who just then was so busy with the lathe and its improvements.[1]

In name at least Dr. Priestley could have been no stranger, even at this early period, to Josiah Wedgwood. The former had only removed from Nantwich to Warrington in the previous September, 1761, and whilst residing there he had been in the frequent habit of spending his leisure hours with the Rev. William Willet,[2] who, as we have already seen, had married Mr. Wedgwood's youngest sister Catherine. It is said that Mr. Willet was amongst the first to inspire Priestley with a love for philosophical investigations. For joined to a highly cultivated understanding, gentle polished manners, and sweetness of temper, he had great mechanical ingenuity, and had cultivated with much success several branches of natural philosophy, particularly magnetism and optics.[3] In this society, Priestley could have been no stranger to the young potter. Burslem was but three miles and a half distant from Newcastle; and, either in his leisure hours or on business, Mr. Wedgwood was constantly journeying thither.[4]

Priestley himself, at this date, records his friendship with Thomas Bentley. 'The tutors (at Warrington) having sufficient society amongst themselves, we had not much acquaintance out of the Academy. Sometimes, however, I made an excursion to the towns in the neighbourhood. At Liverpool I was always received by Mr.

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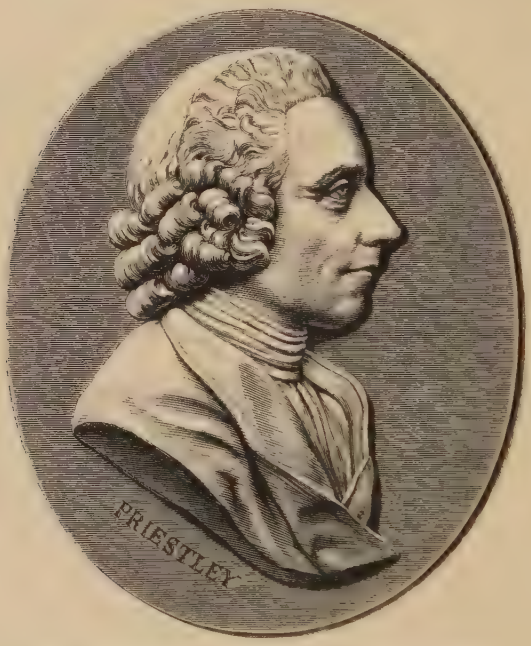
[1] Ibid. p. 69. Subsequently many of Mr. Wedgwood's tools were made by Wyke's workmen, as we shall see.

[2] This name has a varied orthography—Willetts, Willets, Willet. But the last and more modern form is preferable.

[3] Rutt's Life of Priestley, vol. i. p. 39; Tulmin's Memoirs of the Rev. S. Bourne, &c., pp. 258, 263.

[4] Mr. Wedgwood, who became subsequently well versed in optics, first studied this branch of science under his brother-in-law's care. We shall see at a later date that books relating thereto often passed between them.

Bentley, afterwards partner with Mr. Wedgwood, a man of excellent taste, improved understanding, and good disposition.'[1] But their opinions on religious topics widely differed. Bentley's theology was not to be confined within the narrow limits of Priestley's dogmatic views;



(Fig. 68.) CAMEO MEDALLION OF DR. PRIESTLEY.—MAYER COLLECTION.

though their discussions, which were often continued till far into the night, were carried on with the utmost unanimity, and never disturbed the tenor of their friendship.

There can be no doubt that this largeness of view, this ingenuous spirit of inquiry, this perception of an underlying current of truth in most things, this absence of onesidedness and dogmatic rule, lay at the very root of the friendship thus newly formed between Wedgwood and

[1] Memoirs, quoted by Rutt, vol. i. p. 60.

Bentley, and led, by a natural inductive process, to all the more masterly of the artistic achievements which resulted therefrom. Bold and uncompromising in their opinions, these matchless friends, for such they were, could yet see the threads of truth in the beliefs of other men, and thus lived in perfect charity amongst them. And thus it was also in their secular art: they sought far and wide for those conceptions of ideal grace which they ultimately embodied in their works, and the result was, in all higher instances, a perfection such as those only can rival who like them are bound by neither period, style, nor conventional rules, but are willing to catch up the expressions of ideal truth and grace from a range as wide as nature.

These days of slowly growing convalescence and congenial intercourse must have been delightful to Mr. Wedgwood; but duties awaited him, and as soon as he could travel he returned to Burslem in a chaise, as now, for at least two years, the road between Liverpool and Warrington had been sufficiently improved to admit of the passage of vehicles. From this date the correspondence between Wedgwood and Bentley begins; and as their friendship ripens, and time passes on, not a joy or a sorrow, a hope or a fear, a difficulty or a success, but the one imparts it to the other with a manly frankness worthy of such men.

On May 15, 1762, Wedgwood writes to Bentley what is obviously the first letter of their long correspondence :—

'My much esteemed Friend. If you will give me leave to call you so, and will not think the address too free, I shall not care how Quakerish, or otherwise antique, it may sound, as it perfectly corresponds with the sentiments I have, and wish to continue towards you, nor is there a day passes, but I reflect with a pleasing gratitude upon

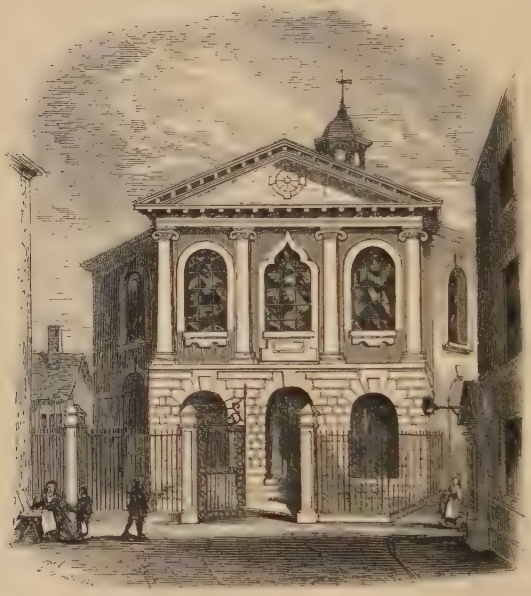
the many kind offices I receiv'd in my confinement at your hospitable Town. My good Doctor, and you in particular, have my warmest gratitude for the share you *both* had in promoting my recovery, and I know he is too well acquainted with the influence of a good flow of spirits (whatever they are) upon the whole animal economy to refuse you your share of merit in this instance. Believe me I could with pleasure dwell much longer upon this subject, and say a great deal more without offending against that excellent rule in your MS. upon the article of letter-writing, which teacheth not to belye our own failings, in *writing better things of any person &c. than we think is strictly true*, but I know your delicacy in this point, and I have done—I find by the papers that the Subscription for Thomson's works is opened again, and intend to add my name to the list, or at least become a purchaser, which may do as well. I wish I could do the same by an excellent piece upon Female Education which I once had the pleasure of reading in MS. Why will not the benevolent author be prevail'd upon to publish a thing which would benefit thousands without hurting one? . . . Since my return home I have been very busy, but have found time to make an experiment or two upon the æther, the result of which, I have ventured to trouble my good Doctor with ; and I can tell you that you, as well as myself, may be thankful if he permits me to write to him on these subjects. You have perhaps this time escaped reading a tedious account of acids and alcalies—precipitation—saturation &c. . . . My respectful compliments wait upon Miss Oats. . . . Be so kind as to tell Mr. Turner I hope to be at Buxton in about three weeks, and should be very glad to see any of my Liverpool friends there.'

Prior to his introduction to Wedgwood, Mr. Bentley seems to have added to his business of a Manchester warehouseman that of a general merchant, exporting not only woven goods and raw materials, but also importing foreign fabrics and miscellaneous articles. It was then a common custom, for even those who were not merchants, to take what was termed 'a venture' in out-bound ships, and to speculate in articles which were put up to auction by those who had imported them. It was therefore quite natural for a person engaged in trade in sea-ports, such as Liverpool, Bristol, Great Yarmouth, or Hull, to drift almost unconsciously into the character and calling of a general merchant; and such we find Mr. Wedgwood's new friend to be in 1762. So long as he remained there, the letters are all addressed to 'Mr. Thomas Bentley, merchant, Paradise Street, Liverpool.'

This was otherwise an important year to Mr. Bentley. He and his coadjutors, amongst whom was Mr. Wyke, were building their Octagon Chapel in Temple Court off John Street. It was, as thus seen in the subjoined sketch, a comparatively handsome building; remarkable for the good and simple taste of its interior decorations, and for the size and convenience of its vestry, which was a perfect model of what such an appendage to a place of worship should be. It was large and well-furnished, with an antechamber adapted for meetings of the trustees and managers, as well as for the use of the clergymen. At the rear of the chapel was an extensive graveyard in which were burial-places belonging to several of the wealthy and influential inhabitants of the town.

As one of the most prominent members of the congregation for whose use the chapel was designed, Mr. Bentley, there can be no doubt, exercised a very general

supervision over its construction and decoration; as the excellence of his artistic taste was already widely known. Yet for the choice of an octagonal form much cannot be said in favour, as it is a received principle in architecture, as in plastic art, that angularity never contributes to beauty, unless under peculiar circumstances, and then only when the angles are very sparingly introduced.



(Fig. 69.) OCTAGON CHAPEL, TEMPLE COURT.

However, the form of the Temple Court Chapel was an octagon, and its members were known as Octagonians. Some of them belonged to the Church of England, as in the case of Mr. Wyke and Mr. Turner, but the majority were Presbyterians, hitherto members of Benn's Garden and Kay Street chapels. Their object in thus uniting for special worship was the preference for a liturgy and a set form of prayers to extempore devotional exercise; at the same time retaining the usual scruples with respect

to the Athanasian Creed with its damnatory clauses, and other parts of the Common Prayer, which either savoured of Catholicism, or did not allow of sufficient latitude of opinion. To meet these views and wishes, a Liturgy consisting of three distinct services was drawn up by the Rev. Mr. Seddon of Warrington; and when approved of was published and used at the opening of the Chapel in June 1763. The book is thus referred to by Mr. Wedgwood in a letter to Bentley dated October 26, 1762 :—'When you favour me with a line I shall be glad to hear if you have fixed upon another minister for your Octagon, as I hear Mr. Sedan has not accepted your invitation, and when your Prayers are published, I sho^d be glad to buy two or three copies of them. I wish they had been published two or three months ago; we should have stood a chance of having them made use of in our neighbourhood—A gent^n at Newcastle[1] has built a chapel in one of our villages which lay at an inconvenient distance from the mother church. When the building was finished he applyed to the Bishop, and prayed his L^dship to give it his blessing, which was refused from motives that do no honour to the cloth, and are not worth troubling you with. The good old gent^n, who was late an attorney, now one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace, being unwilling that his pious endeavours to instruct the ignorant should be lost to the poor inhabitants, went to work himself with his Prayer Book, altered it to his own liking, and sent the MS. to have two or three hundred copys printed for the use of his Chapel, for which he has now took out a license, and agreed with a

[1] John Bourne, Esq., an attorney of Newcastle. Besides building this chapel at Hanley, and another at Lane End in addition to a school, the Free School at Burslem was founded chiefly through his munificence.

good orderly schoolmaster his neighbour, for the valuable consideration of £15 per ann^m^, to officiate as Priest, and he is to enter upon his new employment the next L^dg^ day. You 'l naturally conclude that the hearts of these villagers must overflow with gratitude to their benefactor, who has made his way through so many difficulties to serve them. Nothing like it S^r^ indeed. *The Church is in danger* with them, even before it is well built; and many of his intended flock are afraid of being cheated out of their religion before they have any to lose. His Prayers are found great fault with before they are seen, and they cry mainly out, "We will have them like other folks's Prayers, or have none." The ferment is so strong amongst them at present, that 'tis thought the poor chaplain may sell his sacred vestments again, for in all probability they will not let him enter upon his function. If you have any curiosity to see the Prayers, I will endeavour to send you a copy.'

The minister ultimately chosen by the members of the Octagon, was the Rev. Nicholas Clayton of London; an amiable, intelligent, and highly educated man, who in an after-day succeeded, upon the death of Dr. Aikin, to the Tutorship of Divinity at Warrington Academy. During the thirteen years, 1763–1776, the Octagon remained in the hands of the dissenters, he continued its faithful minister, winning the warm affection of his congregation by the nobility of his nature, and their respect by his superior attainments and uncompromising love of truth. His sermons were noticeable for the beauty of their style and the originality of their thoughts, but his modesty was such as to lead him to refuse all offers of publication. His associate in the ministry was the Rev. H. Kirkpatrick; and their joint labours made the Octagon one of the most

famous dissenting places of worship of the time.[1] Mr. Wedgwood thus refers to its opening, in a letter to Mr. Bentley dated June 16, 1763:—'Your account of the opening of your Octagon gives me great pleasure, both as a friend to your Society and a lover of rational devotion, and I most sincerely congratulate you, and sympathize with you, in the exalted pleasure you must feel in thus leading the way to a reformation so long talked of, and so much wanted in our Church-militant here below. I long to join with you, but am alas! tyed down to this rugged Pott-makeing spot of earth, and cannot leave it at present without suffering for it.'

Another object of interest occupied the attention of Mr. Bentley and his co-trustees during the summer of 1762. This was the erection of new and more appropriate buildings at Warrington for the use of the Academy. They were four in number, and occupied three sides of a court or quadrangle, to which entrance was given, and privacy secured, by a handsome iron gateway and railings. The chief building, fronting the gates, was of brick with stone copings, and a clock and bell-turret in the centre; and this was used for the purposes of a common hall, library, and class-rooms. A second building was used also by the students; the two remaining houses being tutorial residences. One of these, as soon as finished, was assigned to the use of Dr. Priestley, and here he resided till he quitted Warrington for Leeds in 1767. It was the scene of happy days, abiding and brilliant friendships, and valuable services. Here he brought home his very young bride, Sarah Wilkinson, whose father and eldest brother, Isaac and John Wilkinson, played no unimportant part in the vast industrial move-

[1] Transactions of Historic Society of Lancashire, vol. iv. pp. 141-2.

ment of their time. The first invented and brought into action the Steam-engine Blast at his iron-works near Wrexham; the other at the same place, as also at Bradley Forge in Staffordshire, executed all the ponderous castings for the steam-engines required in the Cornish

(Fig. 70.) THE WARRINGTON ACADEMY.—1762.

mines, as well as those for Boulton and Watt when they first commenced business. It was in consequence of some misunderstanding between John Wilkinson and Matthew Boulton that the casting works at Soho were subsequently erected.

In Academy Court—as it was called—Priestley wrote his 'History of Electricity,' his 'Essay on Government,' from whence Bentham derived his celebrated axiom, 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number,' his 'Chart of

Biography,' which begot him the friendship of Lord Willoughby of Parham, and the title of Doctor of Laws from the University of Edinburgh, and other works. Here also, in a small two-story house at the rear of his dwelling, which he fitted up as a laboratory, Priestley made some of his most important experiments in electricity, as

(Fig. 71.) HOUSE OF DR. PRIESTLEY.

also discoveries of the nature of carbonic and nitrous oxides, and other gases not previously known.[1] His more brilliant discovery of oxygen was reserved for a later day and a far different scene—the library of Lansdowne House, with its 10,000 volumes, and its decorations by

[1] Transactions of Historic Society of Lancashire, vol. vii. p. 93. From an admirable paper, 'A Morning's Ramble in Old Warrington,' by Dr. Kendrick; and from other information most obligingly supplied.

Cipriani, in imitation of the antiquities found at Herculaneum.

Dr. Aikin, the theological tutor, who had removed to Warrington at the same period as Dr. Priestley, lived near the Academy in Butter-market Street. His daughter

(Fig. 72.) HOUSE OF DR. AIKIN.

—afterwards Mrs. Barbauld—then in the pride of her youth and great beauty, was the intimate friend of Priestley and his young wife. Some verses by the former led her to try the poet's art, and how far she excelled her master, the undying fame and exquisite beauty of her hymns alone prove. What an immortality in itself to have clothed in melodious language eternal truths which have been a consolation and a stay, alike to those of every Christian creed—to the mind of narrow culture, as

to that of philosophic freedom; to child and adult, to the happy and unhappy, to the prosperous as to those of low estate! What an immortality to have written words which have found their way into the majority of English homes, and far across the seas to those of the colonists of every clime! A poet by nature, and with her understanding highly cultivated, the larger portion of her verse has a gracefulness and finish which robs it neither of strength nor fulness of expression. As much cannot be said for her prose. It is weak under a show of wordiness; her letters and controversial writings especially. But it is in her hymns, her 'Invitation to Warrington Academy,' her 'Ode to Spring,' we find the truest expression of a genius which placed Lætitia Barbauld foremost amongst the literary women of the latter half of the eighteenth century.

(Fig. 73.) CAMEO MEDALLION OF MRS. BARBAULD.—MAYER COLLECTION.

Whenever Mr. Bentley visited Warrington, he shared in its intellectual society, being generally the guest of the Rev. Mr. Seddon. The Aikins and Priestleys were in turn his guests in Paradise Street; and it was on one of these occasions that Miss Aikin was introduced to Mr. Wedgwood, who subsequently presented her with a copy of one of his finest medallions of Dr. Priestley.[1] At a later date, this friendly intimacy was further strengthened by the marriage of Miss Nicholson, Miss Aikin's constant

[1] Mr. Yates, in his 'Memorials of Priestley,' says that this medallion, which was from a design by either Flaxman or Hackwood, was given by Mr. Wedgwood to Miss Aikin 'about the year 1765.' But this is far too early. To none of the cameos can be assigned an earlier date than 1769 or 1770. In 1765 Flaxman was only eleven years old.

companion and former schoolfellow, to Mr. Boardman, the partner of Bentley, and eventually the representative in Liverpool of the firm of Wedgwood and Bentley.

Literature and politics are subjects constantly referred to in this early correspondence. Wedgwood has been reading Thomson's poem on 'Liberty,' and thinks Bentley's warm encomiums fully warranted. He admires the poet for his love of ancient art—an admiration natural to one who was himself so great an artist—and he joins with him in thinking that nations prosper only so long as they are politically free. 'Happy,' he adds, 'would it be for this Island were his three virtues, the foundation of British Liberty—Independent Life—Integrity in office—and a passion for the Common Weal—more strictly adhered to amongst us.' Referring to literary topics he says: 'If you have seen Rousseau's "Emile," I should be glad to know your thoughts of that piece, and now it is translated I should be glad by *your recommendation* to purchase it, notwithstanding his Holiness has forbid its entrance into his Domains; and as I am about to furnish a shelf or two of a book-case, if you would assist me with your advice in the furniture I should esteem it a particular favour.' Again: 'Mr. Willet and I are persuaded that you could inform us more concerning the intended institution in favour of Liberty than has yet appear'd in the Gent^ns^ Mag, but if it is not proper any more should be known at present, we are far from desiring it, but will wait with patience till towards Xmas, when we hope Mr. J. S., agreeable to his promise in the last Gent^ns^ Mag, will be more explicit.'[1] From this last paragraph we may conclude that Mr. Bentley, at

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, October 26, 1762.

this date, contributed to the pages of the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' as he did afterwards to the 'Monthly Review;' and that, if not exactly the Mr. J. S. referred to, he is in the following year at least in communication with him, through the medium of Cave the publisher.

At the close of March 1763, Mr. Wedgwood is in London, and dates one of his letters to Bentley from the Swan with Two Necks, Lad Lane. The popular clamour against the tax upon cider was then at its height, and being present in the House of Lords, he has 'the mortification to hear the Royal assent given to the odious Cyder Bill.' He quotes from Lord Bute's speech in favour 'of the Bill and his own administration;' and, after giving the names of the Lords who voted for the Bill being read a third time, thus adds:—'I had a great deal more to say to you but have my Brother and three or four gentlemen wait^g of me very impatiently whilst I scrawl this line or two w^ch I must beg you will not shew to any body unless their candour is equal to your own. . . . I should be glad to rec^ve a line from you whilst I am here, w^ch will be about seven or eight days to know amongst other things how you digest this extension of the Excise laws. It gives universal disgust here, and is the general topic of every Political Club in Town.' The popular excitement, caused by the passing of this Bill, led, as is well known, to the retirement of Lord Bute, the most unpopular minister, perhaps, that ever held power. 'Ill health, antecedent determination of retirement, and national antipathy to him,' says Horace Walpole, 'are pleaded as the motives to Lord Bute's sudden resignation, which was not known, nay, not suspected, till two days before it happened. Leave out the two first causes, which are undoubtedly false, and call the third by its true name, panic, and you

have the whole secret of this extraordinary revolution. It is plain that if Mr. Pitt had headed the opposition sooner, or that the opposition had had any brains without him, this event would have happened earlier. A single fortnight of clamour and debate on the Cyder Tax, copied from the noise on the Excise in my father's time, and adopted into petitions from the city, frightened this mighty favourite out of all his power and plans, and has reduced Mr. Fox to take almost the same steps, though he, too, has an intended project of retirement to plead; but he keeps his place, takes a peerage, and goes to France. Lord Bute keeps nothing but the King's favour, and that, too, he is not to use. He will be wise to adhere to this measure, now he has taken the other, lest necessity should prescribe, instead of option.'[1]

Though more in favour of heavy and restrictive fiscal duties than his friend Wedgwood, Bentley predicts, in a letter which answers this of March 31, Lord Bute's resignation. To this Mr. Wedgwood, who is still in London, replies four days after the resignation of the hated minister:—'Your agreeable letter I have not now before me, but I remember so much of it relative to L^d^ Bute (his Dying Speech) that I shall certainly believe you possessed of the gift of *second sight*. . . . I do believe you would be against the Extension of the Excise Laws as they are most certainly calculated in their very nature to abridge the Liberty of the Subject—and I do my Dear friend, for the first time, differ somewhat from you in my sentiments on that subject, but cannot now enter into the debate, as I have scarcely three minutes allowed me to write this.'

From the commencement of the eighteenth century,

[1] Letters to Sir Horace Mann, vol. i. pp. 137–8.

Ireland had shared in the steady commercial progress of the sister-country. Her exports, which from 1700 to 1710 had averaged 553,023*l.* 16*s.* 0*d.*, had risen to the value of 2,002,354*l.* 5*s.* 10*d.* from 1750 to 1760; and of this latter sum, 1,274,569*l.* 7*s.* 0*d.* or more than half was the value of goods imported into this country. This external trade of Ireland was, in proportion to its capital, greater than that of England, though it was far behind the latter as to internal trade; its productions, chiefly provisions, and raw materials as hides, flax, and minerals, being sent to this country, instead of dispersed and consumed on its own territory. An Act, which had passed in the last year of George II., and which had permitted the importation of salted beef, pork, and butter, at an almost nominal duty, had greatly augmented the value of the trading relations between the two countries; and so beneficial had the Act proved, that it was renewed in 1761 and again in 1763. To this latter renewal Mr. Wedgwood alludes, and in a manner which shows that his friend Bentley had some commercial interest therein; as also that there existed an exciseable difference in relation to the commodity being butter or grease. 'My principal object in writing to you to night, is just to inform you, that the Irish Butt^r^ or rather Grease Bill, is this day after some warm debates Pass'd the H^o^ of Comm^ns^, but it Extended to all the Ports of England, and is upon any dispute arising betwixt the importer and Custom h^o^ officers to be decided by a justice of the Peace, and two dealers in butter.[1] Lord Strange Exerted his Talents greatly or I believe it had been thrown out

[1] In the autumn of the following year, owing to the high price of food, and the general distress then prevalent, the free import of salt beef, salt pork, and butter, from Ireland, was made known by Royal Proclamation. Annual Register, 1764 part i. p. 103.

for some irregularities in form caused by the alterations, and which there wo[d] not be time this sessions to go through the due forms of, to make it regular.'[1] The same letter shows how Irish grievances, and the efforts and sufferings of the men who strove for their removal, however mistaken in the means to that great end they often were, touched the warm and generous sympathies of the genial Englishman. 'I spent Sunday evening,' says Wedgwood, 'with some Gent[n] who support poor Annett in his confinement by voluntary contribution w[ch] I find runs rather short, and they will be very thankful to any fr[ds] of Liberty who are dispos'd to contribute their mite for that purpose.'

The short space of a year had served to establish the most confidential relations between Mr. Wedgwood and his friend. The latter is ever ready to translate foreign letters, invoices, or passages of works of utility; and here his knowledge of Latin and the chief continental languages proves of great importance. Again this spring, 1763, Mr. Wedgwood is a guest in Paradise Street, this time accompanied by his young nephew Thomas Byerley, whose mother, Margaret Byerley, was, as already seen, a widow, living in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Being ten years older than her brother Josiah, she was consequently at this date a woman of some forty-three years old. She had married when young a native of Durham of the name of Byerley,[2] who, from what can now be gathered, was connected with the Excise, and eventually held a post at Welchpool. But the marriage

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, London, April 12, 1764.

[2] The Byerleys came of a good old northern stock; and probably from the name were Danish in their origin. One of them, Colonel Anthony Byerley, raised a regiment of horse for the service of Charles I., and his troopers are still remembered in popular tradition as 'Byerley's bulldogs.' See Surtees' Durham.

was of no long duration. Mr. Byerley died whilst his children, a son and two or three daughters, were mere infants, and his wife, slenderly provided for, had to exert herself on their behalf. Assisted by her brothers John and Josiah, and probably by her excellent brother-in-law, the Rev. Mr. Willet, she opened a shop for the sale of drapery goods in a central part of the little town, and carried on likewise the business of a milliner, and, as it was then called, a mantua-maker. Here she soon acquired a good connection, as she was industrious, prudent, and much esteemed, and was thus enabled to provide for her children in a humble way. Her boy was put to school by his uncles; her girls, when old enough, assisted her in the shop and workroom; but, thus incessantly occupied, it was impossible for her eye to be everywhere. She was moreover an indulgent mother, and thus Tom Byerley grew up a spoiled boy. With his uncle Josiah he was a favourite, and he seems upon leaving school to have been in London for a time, and returning thence he accompanied Mr. Wedgwood on this last-mentioned visit to Liverpool. He stayed with Mr. Bentley longer than his uncle, and then repaired to Durham to see his father's relations. Of this visit the result was as follows:—

'Your kind letter of the 12th current—June 1763—I receiv'd on Tuesday morn^{g}, my Nephew arriv'd at N:castle on Saturday night, but I have not yet seen him, his friends by his father (who is dead) live at Durham, & he wrote me from Liverpool that he would pay them a visit—Whilst he was with me at Burslem, after our return from Liverpool, his trunk came down from Lond^{n} to N:Castle wth all his papers &c. these unravel'd a part of his History which we before were strangers to. Poor Tom could not stand the shock w^{ch} was the cause of his

Elopem^t, and what we shall now do with a Lad of his turn of mind I cannot tell; what that turn of mind is I cannot so well Explain to you as a few of the s^d papers I have inclos'd will do it, w^ch you may return in a cover ℔ Mr. Sadler—What can be done with so young a subject of Authorism! so terribly infested w^th the Cacoethes scribendi as to take possession of a Garrett at fifteen.'[1] Mr. Bentley's answer to this is not extant, but he probably counselled gentle and sympathetic treatment of these wayward fancies of the sensitive high-spirited lad and his intellectual aspirations. It was then a vulgar prejudice, as indeed it long remained, to associate every literary prompting with starvation and a garret; and Mr. Wedgwood, liberal-minded as he was, did not escape this error of his time. There was much also in the treatment of the young at that day, which was harsh and intermeddling; as though parental and friendly authority must necessarily extend to the most petty details. The lad's papers would have been best held sacred, and the *cacoethes scribendi* left to effect its own cure. As it was, Tom Byerley, when his wild oats were sown, became a steady, plodding, painstaking man of business. But he certainly inherited little of the talent of his mother's race, as time proved when the opportunity to achieve or even carry on great works of art fell into his hands; and thus so far the dreaded 'authorism' ended in no more than painstaking habits of business.

The building of the 'Big House' in 1750 by Thomas and John Wedgwood had inaugurated, as it were, a new era in the history of Burslem. Every well-to-do potter was now for erecting a substantial brick tenement, and amongst the first to follow the example of the brothers

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, June 16, 1763.

Wedgwood were John and William Taylor, whom we have seen as tenants during the lifetime of Mrs. Egerton of the Millhouse Cottages and Potwork. The elder Taylor built himself a house on what was called the 'hill-top.' It became known as the 'hill-top brick house,' and was afterwards let to a Ralph Wedgwood. But the first brick house in Burslem was erected prior to 1715,[1] by a potter of the name of John Adams, which, from its size, and the pot-works adjacent, became known, *par excellence*, as the 'Brick-House Works.' This John Adams died leaving his heir a minor, and from this cause the premises were to let. The date of this event is uncertain, but Mr. Wedgwood hired them on lease, and with great probability some time prior to his marriage. The house was a tolerably roomy dwelling, with a small forecourt or garden in front, and a somewhat larger strip of garden extending in the rear. One gable looked out on to a great open highway or plot of ground, yet broken by patches of common, holes from whence clay had been dug, and sherds of pottery, and on it congregated to their play the children from the neighbouring cottages as also the potters' beasts of burden. The other gable of the dwelling overlooked the works, which occupied a considerable space of ground; the shops, such as the modellers', moulders', turners', throwers', and others, being all low two-storied tenements connected with each other; the upper chambers being generally approached by ladder-stairs from the outside.

As the 'Brick-House Works and dwelling,' Mr. Wedgwood entered upon the occupation of these premises, and under this name he retained them, as we shall see, till his manufactory was finally removed from Burslem in 1773. In the whole of the correspondence extending from 1762

[1] Ante, p. 191.

to 1773, such a title as the Bell Works never once occurs. Some letters are addressed to 'Mrs. Wedgwood, Brick House, Burslem;' others to Mr. Wedgwood, Mr. Bentley, Peter Swift or Cox at the 'Brick-House Works, Burslem.' It also stands to reason that the manufactory on the roof of which Mr. Wedgwood was the first to erect a cupola and bell, for the purpose of ringing the workmen together, must have had some name *prior* to this erection; and therefore there is not the smallest doubt but that the 'Bell Works' and the 'Brick-House Works' are synonymous. The bell was a novelty; it did away with the ear-cracking barbarism of horn-blowing, the workmen were hearing its comparatively pleasant ringing from day to day, and with that natural aptitude of nomenclature to follow the most immediate or obvious causes to which it relates, the 'Bell-hus' soon supplanted the 'Brick-hus' in workman's parlance. After the final removal of Mr. Wedgwood's manufactory, the old title fell more and more into desuetude, till at last generations rose who forgot it altogether. The 'Brick House and Works' stood on what now forms portionally the site of the Wedgwood Institute; and, as associated with some of the most remarkable as also most touching events in the life of the great potter, one more fitting could not have been found.

The 'Brick House,' as thus shown in our illustration, was prepared and received his bride; and here it was, as he confides to Bentley, months after marriage, he and his wife were still 'married lovers.'[1] Here in the leisure hours of evening he reads to her the last new Review, containing maybe some paper written by his friend Bentley; here he teaches her the curious cipher or

[1] We are indebted for this charming sketch to Mr. Aaron Wedgwood of Burslem, a worthy holder of a great name. He well remembers the old house and its surrounding neighbourhood.

short-hand in which he preserves the precious and self-discovered secret of his art, consults her invariably sound

(Fig. 74.) THE BRICK HOUSE.

judgment, as he finds it to be, in matters of form, ornament, and combined results, and here dismisses to the lumber-room the spinning-wheel which has accompanied her from Spen Green, for he is soon aware that more intellectual vocations befit her. Here his first three children are born; the eldest a daughter whose noble destiny it is to become the mother of an eminently gifted man. Here he celebrates the festival attendant on the cutting of the first sod of the Trent and Mersey Canal. Here he buries his second-born son Richard; and suffers the amputation of his long-diseased limb with a fortitude and courage inherent in the highest natures. Here he welcomes the great Erasmus Darwin, and confers with him

on many topics of philosophic interest. Here he receives his dear friend Bentley with generous hospitality; and here unfolds to him, whilst the smoke of the homely pipe curls upwards, all his plans and projects; and here he receives the quaintest and worthiest though most prosaic of clerks, Peter Swift. In short, here Josiah Wedgwood unravels, like all of us, much of the mingled web of Fate; its hopes and joys, its pains and sorrows! There are courtlier scenes to paint—visits from those of genius, rank, wealth, and beauty—days dedicated to science and to art, evenings to social communion and the sweetest music, when Tassie's sulphur casts from antique gems, Sir William Hamilton's loans of drawings and pottery, Hackwood's designs, Mrs. Landre's models, Flaxman's or Webber's latest work from Rome are scattered on the tables, and his daughters play or sing the last sonata of Haydn, or the last song by Dr. Arne; but even such yield in vivid interest to the history of these more homely days of love, aspiration, and friendship. The Wedgwood Institute could have no more fitting site than the ground hallowed by associations so eminently characteristic of the great artist and generous Englishman it is raised to commemorate and honour.

In the sacredness of that friendship which binds the hearts of the two men together, Mr. Bentley is duly informed of the progress of the courtship, for like all true love its course does not run very smooth. 'I hoped,' says Wedgwood, writing to Bentley on January 9, 1764, 'by waiting a post or two to be able either to tell you of my happiness, or at least the time I had expected to be made so: but "O Grief of Griefs!" that pleasure is still deny'd me, & I cannot bear to keep my friend in suspence any longer, though I own myself somewhat asham'd and

greatly mortify'd, to be still kept at bay from those exalted pleasures you have often told me (of) and I am very willing to believe, attend the married state. If you know my temper, and sentiments on these affairs, you will be sensible how I am mortify'd when I tell you I have gone through a long series of bargain makeing, of settlements, Reversions, Provisions &c. &c. : Gone through it—did I say? wo[d] to Hymen I had. No! I am still in the Attorneys hands, from which I hope it is no harm to pray "*good L[d] deliver me!*" Miss W. and I are perfectly agreed, and could settle the whole affair in three lines and so many minutes—but our Pappa, over carefull of his Daughter's interest, wo[d], by some demands which I cannot comply with, go near to separate us, if we were not better determin'd.—On Friday next Mr. W. and I are to meet in great form, with each of us our Attorney which I hope will be conclusive. You shall then hear further from

'Your obliged and very affectionate fr[d],

'Josiah Wedgwood.

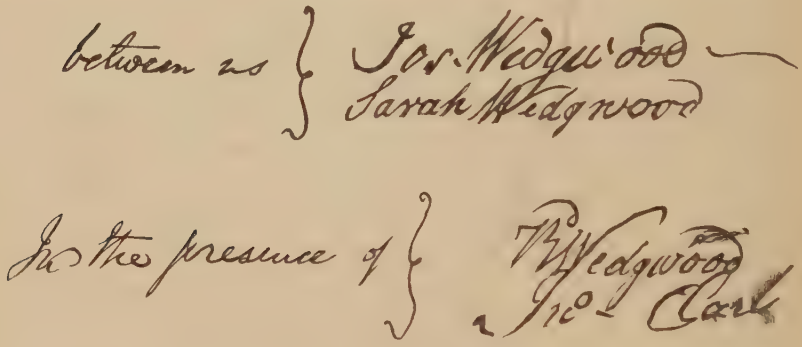
'N. Castle (Xmassing and wanted at play)
9th Jan[ry]—64.

'May you injoy many happy returns of the Season. My best wishes for the same attend Miss Oats. Brother & sister Willett join me very cordially.'

The next letter, dated January 23, 1764, gives good news :—'All matters being amicably settled betwixt my Pappa (Elect) & myself I yesterday prevail'd upon my Dear Girl to name the day, the blissfull day! when she will reward all my faithfull services . . . in three words we are to be married on Wednesday next—On that auspicious day, think it no sin to wash your philosophic

evening pipe, with a glass or two extraordinary, to hail your friend, and wish him good speed into the realms of Matrimony. Adieu my good friend, I am very busy to day, that no business may intrude on my pleasures for the rest of the week . . . . Can you write two letters of Congratulation on one Joyfull occasion.'

No particulars of the wedding are extant, though it was solemnised by licence on the day named, Wednesday January 25, 1764, in the fine old parish church of Astbury, in the presence of the bride's father, Richard Wedgwood, Mr. John Clark, and other friends.[1] The signatures in the marriage register are here given.



(Fig. 75.) SIGNATURES IN MARRIAGE REGISTER.

The wedding party must have proceeded to church on horseback or in vehicles, as Spen Green lay some way off; it was also the depth of winter, and the roads in this part of Cheshire notoriously bad. Cottages and farms lay around the church, and supplied gazers enough, we may be quite sure, as the little procession passed the fine gateway, which, as here seen, gives entrance to the churchyard, and thence into the church itself, with its

[1] Extract from the Parish Register of Astbury, in the county of Chester.

lateral aisles and appended chapel. Astbury Church is still one of the finest in Cheshire; more on the scale of a cathedral than a mother church of a rural district. The ceremony over, there was the joyous return home; Josiah Wedgwood no longer a solitary man, but with the

(Fig. 76.) ASTBURY CHURCH.

good angel of his life now for ever by his side. Then came feasting and merry-making enough; for the bride's father was, if cautious and careful, a genial, hospitable man, and amends were thus made for the morning's journey through execrable roads.

Our painters sometimes need an epic, and seek it amidst scenes and centuries in which modern taste finds little that is relevant to those things with which it can really sympathise, and leave scenes as fully epic unrecorded

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upon their canvas; simply because they belong to the known things of modern days, instead of to those unseen of so-called classic ages. But every age has its epics: every human life worthily fulfilled has points and pauses in it truly epic. This pause in the life of a great industrial leader was a true poem; when, on the winter's

(Fig. 77.) CAMEO MEDALLION OF MRS. WEDGWOOD.—MAYER COLLECTION.

night of January 24, 1764, he rested from his hitherto almost ceaseless labours, and turned his horse's head from the glare of the potters' ovens into the dreary darkness of the still country lanes which led to the home of his expectant bride of the morrow. Was there not a true pause here; a moment's true cessation in the whirr of

the great wheel of human life? He had accomplished much; there was more to accomplish; and this was the narrow resting-stage in the great journey. Hitherto he had worked hard, lived soberly and chastely—how chastely we gather from a few words written only for the eye of his cherished friend Bentley, but which thus, at the close of a century, come before eyes as reverential, and tell us, as in a holy whisper from the dead, how truly the man saw the conditions and contingencies of his work; and that such can only be worthily accomplished through the hallowing sacrifices and baptisms of duty! Thus, as he rode along through night and darkness, might not there mingle with the visions of his morrow's bride, those higher visions of form and exquisitely chaste decoration, which, to be yet achieved, were to proclaim him a perfect master of his art? There surely did; for the sensual and intellectual are ever allied, and the ideal and the real, in the abstract, one. At length the dreariness, the darkness, the wearying journey was over; the door opened, the lights gleamed, the preparative savours of the morrow's feast were there, and the bridegroom gathered the expectant one in his arms! Here was at last the true pause, the true holiday; and who shall not say that it contains an epic, though a simple one?

But the great potter's holiday is not for long. He is soon deeply immersed in work; engine-turning occupying much of his attention. In May he writes thus to Bentley: —'I sh^d have wrote to you again though you are in my debt, but have been extreme busy on māy acc^ts—have sent you a sample of one hobby horse (Engine turning) w^ch if Miss Oates will make use of she will do me honour —this branch hath cost me a great deal of time & thought & must cost me more, & am afraid some of my

best friends will hardly escape. I have got an excellent book on the subject in French & Latin, have inclos'd one chapter wh^ch if you can get translated for me it will oblige me much and will thankfully pay any expence attend^g it. Tom Byerley is learning that Language, but I cannot wait his time—he is a very good boy, & I hope will make a usefull member of society. . . . Accept the best respects of two married Lovers, happy, as this world can make them.'[1]

The lathe in its simplest form, had been employed in the Potteries from about the middle of the seventeenth century. As it came more and more into use, various trifling improvements had been made; and at the period Mr. Wedgwood commenced business for himself, this branch of the trade employed a skilled body of men, who were paid what was then considered a high rate of wages; namely, seven shillings weekly, and the boys called lathe-treaders, who made the necessary movements for them, from fourpence to sixpence.[2] Labour was at this date in great demand, and according to Shaw, it was the custom to work for half a day overtime whilst a candle of a certain size burned. The lathes used were principally made at Congleton in Cheshire, by a smith named Randle, who had ascertained the proper method of tempering both spindle and collar. But at length his secret was arrived at by another ingenious smith named Baddeley, of Eastwood. Accompanied by two turners from Hanley named Thomas Greatbach and William Brookes, he went

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, May 28, 1764.

[2] The wages of this class of workmen rose greatly in the course of a few years. When Arthur Young made his northern tour in 1768, the weekly sum paid to engine-lathe men was from 10*s.* to 12*s.*; and he adds, 'Mr. Wedgwood was the first person who introduced this machine into a porcelain manufactory.'—A Six Months' Tour through the North of England, vol. iii. p. 254.

to Randle's shop disguised as a potter; and, keenly observing the smith's proceedings, saw enough to make the matter his own. Following upon this, Greatbach, who was principal turner at Mr. Palmer's of Hanley, and one of the best workmen of his day, suggested some further improvements, which Shaw asserts were those which formed the engine-lathe. This is open to great doubt; but at least Baddeley worked upon an improved lathe, and Mr. Wedgwood was in communication with him; though ultimately he resorted to Birmingham for the construction of these machines. Here his friend Mr. Taylor put him in communication with a clever middle-aged artisan named William Cox, who at a later date passed wholly into Mr. Wedgwood's service, and between the two the engine-lathe was completed.

The point is one of difficulty, and can only be solved by considering, as in all such cases, that, in the various stages of the development of an industrial art, the constructive necessities on which development depends, give rise at one and the same time to a like train of constructive ideas in different individuals; and though each may arrive at the same solution of the point required by varying methods, yet to each individual there belongs, in the abstract, the originality of the idea on which he has wrought to an effective end. Thus Baddeley made undoubtedly great improvements in the lathe, and Greatbach suggested certain concentric movements which added immensely to its value as a machine. But these militate in no way against the originality of the inventive genius of Mr. Wedgwood; to whom is certainly due the discovery of the method of fluting slightly hardened bodies. As already seen, he had possessed himself of Plumier's book 'L'Art de Tourner,' of which the eighth and ninth chapters

and their accompanying plates furnished him with many novel suggestions; but these had to be so altered and adapted to another and a wholly different art, as to really, in the end, bear on them all the impress of original inventions.

Two editions of this book were published—the first at Lyons in 1701;[1] the second at Paris in 1749, shortly after the author's return from South America, where he had passed many years at the instance of the French government as a botanist and explorer. Plumier was a friar belonging to one of the minor orders; but neither his religious profession, nor his scientific attainments as a botanist,[2] could damp his ardour for mechanical invention. He must have carried on these ingenious speculations in a region where they could have had no practical utility; as one of the earliest results of his return to Europe was the preparation of a new edition of his folio, in Latin and French, with some additional cuts and letterpress. It must have been one of essential value to mechanical art, in its then rapid stage of progress, where each manufacturer, urged by increasing demand and growing taste, had necessarily to look around him for new and effective appliances.

One or more improved lathes were brought from Paris to London, and it is handed down that Mr. Wedgwood paid the possessor the sum of five guineas, to be present whilst one of them was put through its various working capabilities. Of this, however, we have no evidence in his correspondence with either his brother or Mr. Bentley. But we know that the first application of his engine-lathe was

[1] This, as we may judge from the references made to the plates, was the edition used by Mr. Wedgwood.

[2] Between 1693 and 1705, Plumier published three distinct works relating to American botany.

to what was called 'red china' tea and coffee pots; and it was probably one of these which formed the specimen of engine-turning sent to Miss Oates. The first invoice extant relates exclusively to these tea and coffee pots.

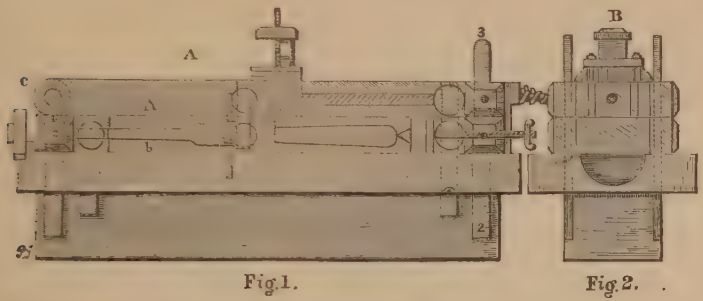

Fig. 1. Fig. 2.

(Fig. 78.) ENGINE-LATHE, COPIED FROM PLUMIER'S WORK, AND REFERRED TO BY MR. WEDGWOOD.

Mr. Wedgwood consigned large numbers to his brother in London, chiefly for export to Hamburg and other northern ports. Their price, wholesale, was 10*s.* per dozen, variable sizes.[1]

[1] Invoice appended to letter, dated February 9, 1765.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

THE BIRTH OF MR. WEDGWOOD'S DAUGHTER SUSANNAH—PRELIMINARIES RELATING TO THE GRAND TRUNK CANAL—THE MESSRS. GILBERT—LORD GOWER AND THE SUNDAY SUPPER AT LICHFIELD—SIR WILLIAM MEREDITH—TURNPIKE BUSINESS—THE CHRISTENING—INCREASE OF BUSINESS—A DINNER-SERVICE FOR SIR WILLIAM—MR. JOHN WEDGWOOD'S ILLNESS—SIR GEORGE SAVILLE—MR. BENTLEY'S INTRODUCTION TO GRIFFITHS THE PUBLISHER—EXPERIMENTS FOR WHITE WARE—MRS. WEDGWOOD LEARNS TO WRITE HER HUSBAND'S SECRET CHARACTERS—THE FIRST INTIMATION OF A REMOVAL FROM BURSLEM—ELEGANT PRESENTS FROM SIR WILLIAM MEREDITH—MR. WEDGWOOD'S LETTER TO HIM, ON THE MANUFACTURE OF EARTHENWARE IN AMERICA—FIRST PATRONAGE OF QUEEN CHARLOTTE—THE ROYAL TEA-SERVICE—MISS DEBORAH CHETWYND—BURNING IN AND POLISHING GOLD—DINNER-SERVICES FOR THEIR MAJESTIES—CHANGES IN PLATE RIMS—PATRONAGE OF THE LOCAL ARISTOCRACY—PROPOSED WAREHOUSE IN LONDON—INTEREST TAKEN IN REVIEWS OF DR. PRIESTLEY'S WORKS—MR. WEDGWOOD'S MOTHER—INCREASED SALE BY MR. BENTLEY OF WEDGWOOD WARE—MR. BENTLEY'S POPULARITY—SIR NIGEL GRESLEY.

CHAPTER IX.

CANAL NAVIGATION AND ROYAL PATRONAGE.

THE commencement of the year 1765 found Mr. Wedgwood one of the busiest men in the kingdom. As chairman, trustee, or subscriber, he is promoting the extension of turnpike-roads throughout the district; is hard at work in gaining supporters to the long-proposed scheme of joining the rivers Trent and Mersey by a navigable canal; and is making experiments in reference to a white body, which promise results of a high character. His first child, a daughter, has just been born to him;[1] and the Brick-House and its works owns not only a busy, but a happy master.

Although the bulk of the correspondence of 1762, 1763, and 1764 between Mr. Wedgwood and his friend has perished, we have abundant evidence, in the earliest of that of 1765, that the all-important question of the Trent and Mersey Canal had occupied their attention from almost the commencement of their acquaintanceship. It naturally did so. Mr. Wedgwood, as a manufacturer, was deeply interested in the promotion of a scheme which would cheapen the transit of raw materials and manufactured goods; and Mr. Bentley had an equal

[1] Susannah, daughter of Josiah and Sarah Wedgwood, baptised January 17, 1765.—Register of the Parish of St. John's, Burslem.

interest in the undertaking. If not exactly at this date a member of the Liverpool Corporation, he was intimately connected with its members and their proceedings in many ways; and considering that it was at the expense of that body that the first survey had been made in 1755, the scheme was one which enlisted their suffrages, and was kept more or less under observation.

In order to make public the benefits likely to arise from a canal, based on a survey made by Brindley and approved by Smeaton, Mr. Bentley, probably at the suggestion of his friend, digested the various necessary facts into the form of a pamphlet, some time during 1764. After receiving various corrections from the hand of Mr. Wedgwood and others, it was published towards the close of the year; and though in a very imperfect form and without a plan, it was largely dispersed by the promoters of the scheme. Subsequently it was remodelled and greatly altered, but the various editions all bear in a degree the impress of Mr. Bentley's hand; his concise method of expression, and elegance of diction. A statement of this sort was necessary. Rival schemes were afloat, and the proprietors of both the Weaver, Irwell, and Sankey navigations were violently opposed to a measure likely to affect their monopoly; but the host of opposition sheets and pamphlets which followed upon its publication stimulated, rather than otherwise, public curiosity, and thus indirectly aided the more active exertions of the promoters of the canal.

To insure the ultimate success of this great scheme, Mr. Wedgwood's activity extended itself in every direction. 'As the Canal will come very near Warrington on your plan,' he writes in the hurried postscript of a long letter addressed to his friend Jan. 2, 1765, 'cannot you

set something a going there; a Subscription for going to Parliam[t] will be most wanted & a separate Petition from that place would not be amiss. . . . . Pray get 1000 Pamphlets printed, we sell what is wanted for the Navigation, & risque the rest.'

The two schemes opposed to that of Brindley were a canal from the river Weaver by Nantwich, Eccleshall, and Stafford to the Trent at Wilden Ferry, without touching the Potteries at all; and the other a canal from the Weaver at Northwich, passing by Macclesfield and Stockport round to Manchester, thus completely surrounding the Duke's navigation, and preventing its extension southward into Staffordshire or any other part of the midland districts. There were persons self-opinionated enough to propose various modifications of the Grand Trunk line, and others who suggested its management by commissioners; and in relation to this last proposal Thomas Gilbert, M. P. for Newcastle, as well as Lord Gower's agent, printed a paper which his brother John Gilbert, the Duke of Bridgewater's agent, thought ill-advised. It likewise roused Mr. Wedgwood's indignation. The latter, who had only just returned from a visit to his friend, thus wrote in the letter above alluded to:—

'We have sent you a parc[l] by this morning's Coach which I hope you have rec[d] & that Mr. Colquit hath acquainted you with our proceedings at Wolsley.[1] The moment I returned from Liverpool I had one of the printed papers you refer to put into my hands, which astonish'd, confounded and vexed me not a little. I was told the writer was Mr. Gilbert, M. P. & that he had

[1] Mr. Colquit was a member of the Liverpool Corporation. We thus also learn that meetings had been held at Wolsley Bridge prior to that of December 30, 1765; but the business transacted was probably all more or less connected with the opposition to the rival schemes.

given it out as a scheme to obviate every objection. his Bro^r Mr. John Gilbert call'd upon me the same evening to whom I gave my sentiments of the four last paragraphs, that they were dark, mysterious, & ungenerous & much better calculated to overturn than support our design. That his printing and circulating such a paper without once consulting the Persons who had hitherto lent their heads, hands and purses too in planing & forwarding our scheme of Navigation was as indelicate as the insinuations were gross and unfounded. . . . Mr. Gilbert reply'd that he wished his Bro^r had not taken so unadvised a step and desired I wo^d meet L^d Gower, Mr. Garbitt & his Bro^r at Lichfield on Sunday evening, for these gent^n with Mr. Councelor Beard of Newcastle were it seems to settle preliminaries for Monday, and fatal wo^d have been the consequences thereof. Mr. Beard was sent for, Mr. Sparrow[1] nor any on else ever mention'd. I plainly saw the necessity of our going, but had a very great sacrifice to make, such as no one can feel stronger than yourself in consenting to intrude myself unasked upon a junto which I then thought did not want my company. Mr. Sparrow, Mr. Brindley (engineer) and my Bro^r[2] saw our critical situation in the same light with myself, & stifling every other sensation, in that of promoting our GENERAL CAUSE, we altogether posted away to Lichfield, where we arrived about 10 minutes after his L^dship. Mr. Garbitt was there in conference with Mr. Gilbert, and we soon found that they were both very sanguine in supporting their chimerical plan of a medium betwixt Proprietors and Comm^rs. As I had thought more on

[1] A solicitor of Newcastle, whose services were of great value in promoting the success of the Grand Trunk Canal.

[2] This was Mr. Wedgwood's eldest brother Thomas, then residing at the Overhouse.

this subject than most of our people had, they served me as poor Uriah of old was served, & placed me in the fore front of the battle. After a slight skirmish with Mr. Gilbert in which he did not choose to answer *point blank* to some questions which I had prepared for him, he desired I would go & speak to Mr. Garbitt and his friends who were in another room. I obeyed, and soon perceived by what each of them s^d^ compared with what they had wrote to myself and others, that the *medium scheme* was the joint production of those two gentlemen's brains, or at least they had concerted or adopted it together. Mr. Garbitt at my request explained to me the whole plan, & answered my questions rather more explicitly than Mr. Gilbert had done, the consequence of which was, that in 10 minutes time he found his *baseless Fabrick* tumbling down to the ground, and deserted it immediately, without an attempt to rear it up again—I am afraid you will think me rather too figurative, but remember I am not reasoning now, I am only huzzaing and singing I o' after a conquest. . . . To return, Mr. Gilbert wo^d^ neither speak quite out, nor give up the point, but we were call'd to sup with L^d^ Gower in the midst of our debates. After supper the subject was introduced before his L^d^ship which I was very glad of, as I know him to be *sensible* and *Humane* and the scheme proposed to be either *weak* or *Tyrannical.* His L^d^ship desired that both the plans might be explained to him—Mr. Gilbert opened his own, and made his remarks upon it at large—Think my friend how I was delighted to find that he had not one argument, inference, or flourish to make in the whole harangue, but what I *felt* myself able with the greatest ease to confute. In this situation—I was call'd upon to make my reply, & most joyfully

enter'd upon the task, my *heart* was engaged in the cause, and that I believe made my thoughts and expression obedient to my wish—You well know what could be said on the subject, which may save you the trouble of reading & me of writeing half a dozen sheets at least—I I had time for it—but I am now interrupted by a gent[n] who wants to subscribe £1000, & tell me some interesting facts. In short then I concluded in *very honestly* endeavouring to interest his L[d]ship's candour and humanity, in favour of the Proprietors, by appealing to him—If it wo[d] not be very cruel, when a set of men had employed their time, their talents & their purses for ten years together—the best part of their lives—in the execution of a design by which the Public wo[d] gain £300 ℔ cent, & when they have executed this Laborious task, what is their reward? Why a new sett of masters are raised up to controul both them & their works, they have hitherto had but bare interest for their money, & now perhaps they will be permitted to have 1 or 2 ℔ cent extra out of 300 they have saved to the Public, which poor pittance wo[d] not at the highest calculation pay them 4[d] ℔ diem for their past Labour. Lord Gower turn'd to Mr. Gilbert. It wo[d] be hard he s[d], Gilbert, it wo[d] be very hard, and if the Proprietors can save so much to the Public as Mr. W. hath proposed, I do not think their plan can be rejected by Parliament—Our plan was accordingly fixed, & L[d] Gower declared, & every one join'd in the opinion, that if we had not met that evening at Lichfield, nothing could have been done at Wolsley Bridge, & as that was the last meeting (of any importance) that we could have, we sh[d] scarcely have got over these difficulties. . . . You want a good plan for raising the

money. That I hope is now fixed and am in no fear of the subscription being filled, & as to a general Letter on the advantage of Inland Navigation, I have no time to write or think about anything, but the *immediate business of the day*. Public business I mean, for as to my private concerns, I have almost forgot them. I scarcely know, without a good deal of recollection, whether I am a Landed Gentleman, an Engineer, or a Potter, for indeed I am all three, & many other characters by turns. pray heaven I may settle to something in earnest at last. . . . Lord Gower told me he was sorry we had put so trifling a paragraph into our pamphlet as that about the gondolas &c., many of his friends had observed the impropriety, & Mr. Gilbert s[d] the same.[1] At Wolsley our pamphlet was greatly aplauded, & the great turn in favour of canal navigation, was in a great measure attributed to its influence. I mean amongst the people who had not seen the D of B's noble works.' [2]

One of the earliest friends and patrons of Wedgwood

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[1] This criticism was not only just, but well-timed. The gondola, which, probably from some reminiscences of his foreign travel, the Duke of Bridgewater had introduced as a pleasure-barge upon his canal between Worsley and Manchester, was quite out of keeping with an English landscape, and could serve few purposes even of utility. The passage referred to in Mr. Bentley's pamphlet is as follows:—'Having considered the principal advantages which the public may reasonably expect from the execution of this design, we ought not to forget the pleasure that may arise from it to individuals, especially as taste is so universally cultivated, that our farms are gradually improving into gardens. And here it must be allowed, that to have a lawn terminated by water, with moving objects passing and repassing on it, is a finishing of all others the most desirable. And if we may add the amusement of a gondola that may convey us to many flourishing towns, through the most delightful valleys in the kingdom, and the convenience of having variety of fish brought alive in well-boats for our tables, we have articles of luxury, which the inhabitants in other situations wish for in vain.'—A View of the Advantages of Inland Navigation, p. 36.

If the Grand Trunk and other English canals had had no greater advantages to offer, there would have been little chance of their extension. Yet, happily for the art to which he ultimately devoted himself, it was Mr. Bentley's mental characteristic to see the poetic as well as the utilitarian side of every question.

[2] Wedgwood to Bentley, January 2, 1765.

was Sir William Meredith, Bart., then and subsequently M.P. for Liverpool.[1] His parliamentary duties kept him much in London; but when at Henbury, his seat near Macclesfield, Mr. Wedgwood went often to and fro as a guest; Sir William's taste for the fine arts leading him to highly appreciate the genius of the great potter. When in town, Sir William was indefatigable in securing the loan of gems, prints, and rare specimens of antique and other pottery for his friend; occasionally he purchased prints representative of vases and antique sculpture, and sent these to Burslem as his kindly gift; and Mr. John Wedgwood frequently called upon him to talk over, as his brother's representative, some commercial or artistic topic, or to meet such patrons of the arts as Sir Henry Chairs and Lord Foley.

In the letter from which we have thus gleaned the above interesting details of Mr. Wedgwood's indefatigable services in behalf of the Grand Trunk Canal, we catch just a passing glimpse of some slight misunderstanding on the part of Sir William. Mr. Wedgwood, it seems, has written a letter to Mr. Tarleton, a member of the Liverpool Corporation, in relation to the 'Northwich scheme,' thinking Sir William is interested in the 'Stockport scheme *only*.' 'Sir William you say,' he remarks to Bentley, 'is offended at me; I am very sorry for it, & though I know

[1] Sir William Meredith was elected for Wigan in 1755, and for Liverpool in 1762. In 1765 he was appointed a Lord of the Admiralty, an office which he resigned on the dismissal of the Rockingham Administration.

Cavendish's Debates (note), vol. i. p. 52; Walpole's Memoirs of the Reign of George III. (note), vol. i. p. 350.

Sir William's father was Amos Meredith, Esq. His sister Mary first married the mad Lord Ferrers, who was hung in 1760 for murdering his steward; and secondly, Lord Frederick Campbell, brother to John fifth Duke of Argyle. She was burnt to death at Coombe Bank, in Kent, in 1807, in her seventieth year. It is said that Lord Ferrers's first disagreement with his steward was connected with an allowance paid to Lady Ferrers. — Cunningham's Walpole, vol. iii. p. 287.

I have never done anything to merit his displeasure, yet I am under so many obligations to him, that I cannot bear he should suspect me of ingratitude.' The sorrow thus expressed is soon at an end. Through the kindly offices of Mr. Bentley, Sir William is eventually won over to the grand 'scheme,' and Mr. Wedgwood hard at work upon a dinner-service for him, which when finished is 'the completest that has yet been sent from the Potteries.'

It might be thought that the multifarious business connected with the intended Navigation would be enough and more than the friends could manage conjointly with their ordinary duties, but this is not so. Their active and versatile minds look keenly at the social needs around them, and their ready steps and generous hands are put forth to lead the way or aid the burden. We therefore find that at this date Mr. Bentley is engaged in organising a society for some purpose or another,[1] and Mr. Wedgwood as much immersed in the business of Turnpike-Roads as that of Canal Navigation. The scheme Bentley is connected with relates probably to some commercial or local improvement. 'I do most sincerely congratulate you,' writes Mr. Wedgwood, 'on the advantages you must receive from your infant institution. Your being on the Committee gives me a very favourable idea of the good sense of the members. What a pity it is that a man so capable of serving the interests of millions should be at all confined to the circle of his own affairs. I know your expanded bosom, & I have some knowledge of your talents. O my friend! that I had but power

[1] Mr. Bentley belonged to the Volunteers, or, as they were then styled, 'Independent Companies.' He was probably an officer in a troop known as 'Captain Ingram's,' as the scarlet coat he had on when painted by Caddick, in about 1768, was part of the uniform worn by that body.

equal to my wishes, your station should then be more adapted to your abiltys.' What noble expressions these are, and how worthy of the lips which utter them! Unconsciously to himself—even whilst he thus writes—this unequalled friend is preparing the true work which is to dignify and uplift the man who is so dear to him!

Respecting his own extraneous duties, Mr. Wedgwood writes thus to his brother John on February 1, 1765:—'We have another Turnpike broke out amongst us here betwixt Leek and Newcastle & they have *vi et armis* mounted me upon my hobby-horse & a prancing rouge (rough) he is at present, but hope he will not take the route of London again. He carried me yesterday to Leek, from whence I am just return'd, much satisfied with our reception there—to morrow I wait upon S^r^ Nigil (Gresley) to beg his concurrence, & on Monday must attend a meeting to settle the petition &c. at Mony Ash at y^r^ fr^d^ Isaac Wheildon's—We pray to have the Uttoxeter and Burslem Turnpike joined, and to have the Road made Turnpike from Buxton & Bakewell to Leek, & from Leek to N: Castle. Whether or not our good friends at Newcastle will give us battle on this occasion, we do not know; if they do, there will be some probability of my haveing a comm^d^, & seeing the great City again.[1]—£2000 is wanting for this road. My Uncles Tho^s^ & Jn^o^ have—I am quite serious—at the first asking subscribed—I know you will not believe me, but it is a certain fact—five hundred pounds!!![2]—I have done the

[1] Mr. Wedgwood alludes here to the fierce opposition made by the innkeepers and tradesmen of Newcastle against the Act of Parliament passed in 1763 for improving the road from Lawton to Burslem. It appears that on that occasion he was called to London to give evidence before a Parliamentary Committee.

[2] The fact thus humorously related leads to the conclusion that John and Thomas Wedgwood, of the Big House, who through his marriage had become Mr. Wedgwood's uncles,

like, intending 2 or 300 of it for you, & if you choose any more you must let me know in time—it will not be wanted till summer, though it must be subscribed now.'

There are pauses, however, in this life of incessant industry; and the little festival attendant on the christening of his first-born, affords Mr. Wedgwood a brief one. Ever solicitous for his brother's health, he invites him into Staffordshire, and thus lures him:—We entertain 'some hopes of haveing the pleasure of your company this spring which I doubt not you will find very salutary, especially as we have now got such pretty employment for you. Sukey is a fine sprightly lass, and will bear a good deal of dandleing, and you can sing lulaby Baby—whilst I rock the Cradle. . . . We have now added another Christian to our family & her Mamma who is very well . . . is privately churched, but the weather is too bad to carry her to our Abbey at present—Your Lobsters made an elegant dish, were extreme good—pleased my Daddy vastly who stay'd with me three days on the occasion, & was as usual very merry & very good company. Tell Jn° Wedgwood says the old gent[n] that I drink his health & thank him for his Lobsters, they are very fine, & a creature that I like.' This shows us that the christening feast has been enriched by the brother's friendly hand, and that a present of shellfish from London was a great treat to Staffordshire folks in that day. Young Tom Byerley is not at his little cousin's christening, but again with his uncle John in London, who perhaps spoils him, for his boyish freaks are not yet at an end.[1]

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were very careful of their money. They were, however, hospitable in their way, and by fits and starts opened their purse-strings boldly.

[1] This letter to Mr. John Wedgwood, dated February 1, 1765, is the first of a brief but very interesting series.

We begin now to get very important glimpses into Mr. Wedgwood's general business, the extent of his foreign orders, and the descriptions of ware which have the largest sales. What he styles 'Red China engin'd' has a large demand, in the foreign markets especially; and is made principally in the form of tea and coffee pots and cream-jugs. Three crates a day, sometimes six, sometimes more, are sent off by waggon to rumble their slow way to London; for this seems the port Mr. Wedgwood prefers for the export of his ware, even for the north. Sometimes half a dozen of the crates are for the London warehouse, which as yet is on a somewhat humble footing, being clearly no more than a very large ground-floor room or two, at the sign of the Artichoke, Cateaton Street, or in the immediate neighbourhood. Young Tom Byerley, now he is again in London, keeps the books, and Mr. John Wedgwood sees to the monetary, general, and artistic business; for the services of the modeller, engraver, and enameller are in requisition for all the finer kinds of work. Flower-pots are also another speciality on which Mr. Wedgwood's genius has already laid its sign, and the foreign demand for them steadily increases. Crates are opened in the warerooms for general inspection, and the best retail shops supplied—the latter a custom wholly negatived at no late date—but Mr. Wedgwood has the sound judgment to perceive that commercial greatness takes growth amidst the humility of small things. Occasionally the demand is more than he can meet, and he has to make up a home or a foreign order with the best the manufacturers around him can supply. One such circumstance gives us the knowledge of his own consciousness that his laborious industry to perfect his

art has not been thrown away, and that already his hand and eye are those of a master. So is it ever with true genius! the humility that desires to step onwards to higher and higher things is conjoined with the absolute certainty that much which is effected is perfect in its way. To make up some crates, ware has been packed from two neighbouring 'banks,' those of Baddeley and Edge; and Tom Byerley, in taking stock, makes mistakes by referring them to the wrong manufacturer. 'No. 122,' writes Mr. Wedgwood to his brother, 'are an 18 and 24 of Baddeleys, & No. 3 and 4 "Tom" says are an 18 and 24 of Edges. They are both 24's, one of them of Jos Wedgwood's make—so Tom is either humm'd himself, or was trying a trick upon us.—These are the worst I have seen; but if Tom does not know the difference betwixt Mr. Somebody's T: pots & mine, he is on a parr with Mr. White's customers, & may make abatem^{ts} upon other persons T: pots in taking stock—I do not want any more ord^{rs} unless for collyflower ware, for those I have will not be completed in any time.'[1]

The 'red china' manufactured by Mr. Wedgwood at this date, was formed of the same fine ochreous clay as that used by the brothers Elers nearly a century before, with probably an admixture of soap-stone, or china clay, which imparted density and hardness of body. It was therefore in its nature a porcellaneous substance; though, from the absence of semi-transparency, it was relatively, and not absolutely, porcelain or china. It was also a dry body, and required no surface glaze; although from the nature of its components, and from friction on the wheel and lathe, it possessed, in its finished state, a considerable

[1] Letter to Mr. John Wedgwood, Cateaton Street, London, dated March 13, 1765.

polish. But, like all unglazed bodies, its chief beauty was derived from form and the manifold effects of the turner's lathe; and hence, as we have seen, all Mr. Wedgwood's improvements of the lathe were first tested on the 'red china.' Tea and coffee pots, sugar-pots, milk-pots, and some few chimney ornaments, were the articles chiefly made in this ware; although, as we shall see, this ochreous body had higher adaptations when the classic vase and antique tazza led to reproductions which often surpassed the originals, especially in effects produced by the lathe. The manufacture of this 'red china' in the ordinary forms of tea and coffee pots was very considerable in the Potteries at this date. Palmer of Hanley, and the Baddeleys of Shelton, made a vast amount of it. But though excellent in its way, it failed in many of those essentials which gave Mr. Wedgwood's ware of this and other descriptions already a priority in the home and foreign market.

The cloud is blown over, and Mr. Wedgwood is at this date busy with orders from Sir Wm. Meredith. 'I am glad,' he writes to his brother, 'you have got some franks from Sir Wm. I shall soon be out of covers for A and H, this for your governm^t^ when you see that Patriotic Gent^n^ again. I wish he wo^d^ give me a copper plate with his Arms suitable for Tableplates, & a Crest (if he wo^d^ like it) to fill up one of the compartm^ts^ in the dish rims, it wo^d^ then be in my power, to present him with one of the completest services of Staffordshire ware ever got up in the County, & I sh^d^ be glad if you wo^d^ tell him so much & shew him one of the Pencill'd plates.'[1] 'I have had two most obliging letters from Sir Wm, ordering a small service of printed dishes &c. and pro-

[1] February 13, 1765.

mising to recomm[d] them—I wish you could make it conven[t] soon to wait upon him & present my best thanks for all his favours—I have not the service he w[d] have by me, but shall this week send it to be done & a strict charge to have it done & return'd to me immediately. The Green and gold sa (sauce) bowles will be done in a few days, & pray let me have his thoughts about his Crest or Arms: if you cannot see Sir Wm soon I shall trust to your writeing him my acknowledgments.'[1]

At work as he is early and late, these multifarious labours press heavily on the busy man. 'If you can spare Tom,' he says, 'I sh[d] be glad you wo[d] send him down immediately, for I am confin'd more to writing than is any way consistent with my interest. Our London orders & some foreign ones just come to hand are very large, & require my constant attention in ordering & seeing got up.' Five days later, he adds: 'I am going to be very busy, haveing come (to) a full resolution of attempting in earnest the French ware, & am every night forming schemes for that purpose. I mention nights, for whilst Tom is from home I am too closely confin'd to the Counting-house to do anything of that sort in the day.[2] Your next will I hope tell me he is coming home to me.' But the next letter brings word that his brother is ill, and all thoughts of business give way to the intensity of his affection. 'Do not think of parting with Tom whilst you are at all indispos[d]. his affection for you will make him your best companion, nurse & servant—and he knows he cannot oblige me

[1] Letter to Mr. John Wedgwood, dated February 19, 1765.

[2] In the succeeding month Mr. Wedgwood recurs briefly to this subject:—'I have already some tolerably solid business cut out for you. If I pursue my scheme of white glazed ware, some materials for which must be bo[t] & disguised in London before they are sent to me—but more of this hereafter.'—Letter to Mr. John Wedgwood, March 11, 1765.

more than by making himself serviceable & agreeable to you. I hope you will both come down together & I think the sooner the better.' The lad waits tenderly on his uncle, and, when the latter is better, returns to Burslem; Mr. John Wedgwood preferring, as it seems, the society of his London friends to country air and Staffordshire hospitality. 'Tom arrived here last night, and is set in earnest to his business, and I hope will settle again. He was grown really fond of his business, before your giddy Town set his spirits afloat again, but I have great hopes a little encouragem^t—a sett of *new* books[1]—& one month's serene air, will bring them to subside again.'

At an early date after the order had reached him, Mr. Wedgwood completes Sir William Meredith's dinner-service of cream-coloured ware, and in writing to ask where it shall be sent, begs his acceptance of it as a slight 'acknowledgement (as no better is in my power) for the repeated favours you have bestowed upon me. The fluted coffee service you favour'd me with is finished all to painting. Sir Geo. Savils last orders are sent & the hon^ble Mr. Townsend's are at printing.[2] If you have

[1] Mr. Wedgwood alludes here to books for the counting-house. His old set are nearly written out, and he has ordered a new set from town.

[2] Several master-hands have sketched Sir George Saville's character in a spirit of zealous admiration. Horace Walpole, usually so acrimonious, thus wrote of him:—'Sir George Saville had a head as acutely argumentative as if it had been made by a German logician for a model. Could ministers have been found acting by the advice of casuists and confessors, Sir George would have started distinctions to hamper their consciences; but though they walked not in such ruled paths, his want of ambition carried him so seldom to the House, that they were not often troubled with his subtleties. He had a large fortune, and a larger mind; and though his reason was sharp, his soul was candid, having none of the acrimony or vengeance of party. Thence was he of greater credit than service to that in which he listed.' (Memoirs of Reign of George III., vol. i. p. 351.) Sir Denis Le Marchant adds in a note:—'This character of Sir George Savile is not less honourable to his memory than Mr. Burke's well-known and brilliant panegyric at the Bristol election in 1780. Few public men received more respect from their contemporaries—few, perhaps, so well earned it. He devoted his time, his talents, and his purse, almost exclusively to the public service. Neither

any further comm^ds for me my Bro^r will wait upon you to rec^ve them.' He then proceeds to ask Sir William's interest in procuring some 'genteel employment, not attended with too much fatigue,' for another 'Brother'[1] who is 'deservedly very dear to me,' and whose health was injured by the severity of his previous duties, though now 'pretty well recovered.' Sir William's answer is not extant; but his recent revival in the House of Commons of the important question of General Warrants made him at this time very popular; and though of course siding with the opposition, a good deal of power was in his hands.[2] So much was this the case that the Tories in Liverpool were at this very date plotting to unseat him in the next Parliament; and of this Mr. Wedgwood drops a hint in the same letter. 'You must certainly be acquainted with every movem^t at Liverpool, but my great value for your interest, urges me rather to incur

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the fashionable nor literary circles of London, nor the pursuits of the country, had any charms for him; he seldom resided at Rufford, the splendid seat of his ancestors; business was his passion, and, whether in town or country, constituted his sole occupation; fortunately, he had abilities to perform it creditably, and his generosity, which was scarcely bounded by his great estate, had always usefulness for its object. The same discernment appears in his selection of the Parliamentary questions with which his name is identified, such as the Limitation of the Claims of the Crown on Landed Estates; the Relief of Roman Catholics as well as of Protestant Dissenters, and the Condemnation of General Warrants; and, lastly, the Improved Representation of the People: all these he advocated with an earnestness and singleness of purpose and consistency of action, which extorted the admiration even of his opponents. Though not an impressive speaker, he was always sensible and very fluent, and he spared no pains to understand his subject. His speeches, indeed, partook of one of the characteristics of his mind, which was a simplicity approaching to austerity, and an exemption from party or even popular prejudices. His life in all respects corresponded with his principles, and was unstained by vice or even weakness of any kind; his death was regarded as a public loss. He died in 1784, unmarried, aged 57; and with him ended the illustrious line of the family of Savile. He was a collateral descendant of the Marquis of Halifax, to whose estates his father had succeeded.'

[1] This was evidently the brother we shall see subsequently referred to as the 'Alderman.' It was probably Samuel Wedgwood or Abner Wedgwood.

[2] Annual Register, vol. viii. (1765) p. 26.

the censure of being officious than not to tell you w^t I am made acquaint^d with from undoubted authority, that some designs yet in embryo are forming at that place intended to your disadvantage.'[1]

Immersed in public and private business of so many kinds, Mr. Bentley, even at this early period, had occasion to frequently visit London; and in February 1765 we catch this pleasant glimpse of him, and of his forthcoming introduction to Griffiths, the editor and publisher of the 'Monthly Review.' Griffiths was one of those two-sided characters often met with in society, and particularly in that day, when the connection between capital and literary labour stood on a very different footing from the present. His sordid and brutal conduct towards Oliver Goldsmith cannot be blotted out of any generous remembrance of that truly English genius; and yet he had his bright side, feasted his friends, though he starved his authors, and reckoned amongst his admirers many good and eminent men, of whom Mr. Wedgwood, through the introduction of his brother, was one. Happily the Wedgwoods were not authors, to be paid wages which insured starvation and a garret; but well-to-do gentlemen who were only admitted to the gaieties at Turnham Green, and not to the bargain-making of Paternoster Row. 'Mr. Bentley will be in Town on Wednesday Evening next,' writes Mr. Wedgwood to his brother on February 16, 1765. 'I am just to kiss his hand as he passeth thro' Newcastle in the coach on Monday next & shall direct him where to find you. L^rs to him will be directed—at Mr. Ward's Haberdasher in Holbourne. . . . I hope you have present^d my respectfull comp^ts to Mr. Potter, & Mr. Birch & to

[1] Draft of letter to Sir William Meredith, appended to letter to Mr. John Wedgwood.

your good Doctor—Mr. Griffiths, I need not mention—you know he hath one of the warmest places in my heart. I hope you will carry Mr. Bentley to Turnham Green, and am well assur'd those two geniuses will be highly delighted with the interview. I insist when that happens that I am consider'd as *present in spirit* though alass *absent in body*. I can hardly conceive a scene I sho^d be better pleas'd in partaking of, but I am going to be very busy.' Again on February 19, Mr. Wedgwood writes: 'After the most diligent search I can find only one of G: W^ms's Pamphlets which I sent on Monday by our worthy fr^d Mr. Bentley who I hope you have had the pleasure of seeing before this will reach your hand.' Again on March 6 Mr. Wedgwood writes: 'Though I have now only time to write a few lines, it being near post time, I shall be so unreasonable as to expect a very long one in return.[1] You will I doubt not have a copious subject—the Confabulations of the Triumvirate—My good fr^d Mr. Bentley I know hath given up our liberty as a Chimera—have you convinced him of his error? or hath he bro^t you to be of his opinion?' Mr. Bentley stood not alone in his opinions at that date, nor indeed long after; though men like Mr. Wedgwood, of profounder insight into the bearings of public questions,

[1] This expected letter was evidently written and reached Mr. Wedgwood's hand, for in reply he writes, March 11: 'Your feast at Turnham Green (mental feast I mean) was just what I expected, from the meeting and collision of such geniuses as were there assembled; & from your description with a little of the art of designing, I could spread a yard of canvas over with an excellent Group of figures.—How happy sho^d I have been in partaking of so instructive and elegant an Entertainm^t!—but alass I must be content with *fashioning my clay* at an humble distance from such comp^y, & live, breathe, & dye, amongst animals but one remove above the Earth they are teazeing.

'I do not envy my friends their more refined enjoyments of life, but I do sometimes wish for a pair of wings, & a learners seat amongst them, & had the good Bishop Wilkins scheme for flying been bro^t to any tolerable perfection, you had most certainly seen me fluttering at your Dining room window at Turnham Green.'

knew that there was that in the nature of Englishmen, and in the constitution of their country, which set a limit to the prerogative of the crown, and the base subserviency and venality of party. Yet there was reason for dread and doubt. A great statesman and his splendid administration overthrown for the timid, subservient, and vacillating councils of far inferior men; the hateful rule of party, divided even against itself; increased taxation, dearness of food, and consequent discontent amongst the manufacturing and labouring classes; and, to crown all, the imposition of the Stamp Act upon the North American colonists, which led to results most woeful to ourselves in that generation, and to those still more profoundly woeful to America itself in these our present days. Men like Mr. Bentley might well think liberty and the public good mere ideas without reality; and such, indeed, they would have been but for the great industrial leaders of that generation, who, like the illustrious man of genius he so worthily called his friend, by the creation and improvement of new arts and new industries, were placing a giant power in the hands of the people which should enable them to bear up against increased taxation, and in the long run place the country of their birth first and foremost in the scale of nations.

Here and there we get passing glimpses into the home of peace and industry which Mr. Wedgwood had the supreme happiness to call his. They are most delightful—small but sunny pictures of scenes and things long passed away, but bearing on them the stamp of a governing refinement, which, growing and increasing, was preparing for the day of higher things. 'I have just begun a course of experiments for a white body and glaze which promiseth well hitherto,' writes Mr. Wedgwood to his brother John,

March 6, 1765. 'Sally is my chief helpmate in this as well as other things, & that she may not be hurried by having too many *Irons in the fire*, as the phrase is, I have ord[d] the spinning wheel into the Lumber room. She hath learnt my characters, (at) least to write them, but can scarcely read them at present—This business I often think if you could but once enter into the *spirit* of it, would be the prettiest employment for you imaginable. I do not intend to make this ware at Burslem & am therefore laying out for an agreeable & convenient situation elsewhere.' In this we have the first hint of Mr. Wedgwood's intention to remove from Burslem, and establish his works on a larger and more permanent footing. It was not till the following year that he opened negotiations for the purchase of the Ridge House estate in the neighbouring township of Shelton; but rich as he now comparatively was, through the rapid increase in his business and the addition of his wife's dowry, a wise economy governed all his ordinary proceedings. 'Will you have Taffy again this summer,' he asks his brother, 'or some better Beast—if you do not choose to Ride him ag[n], I intend parting with him, as two horses (now I have got an increase of my family another way) are rather a needless expence to me.' [1]

The elegant attentions of absent friends lend another charm to Mr. Wedgwood's daily life. 'Three pacquets by one post from Sir Wm,' he writes again to his brother a few days after, 'two of them enclosing (prints of) birds, insects, and flowers. I have since wrote two L[rs] to him directed to Sir Wm Meredith in London—that direction I suppose will find a Gent[n] of his eminence—if you think

[1] Letter to Mr. John Wedgwood, Cateaton Street, London, February 19, 1765.

otherwise as he is remov'd to Chelsea, pray do the needful for me.' 'Mr. Bentley must wait upon him and wo[d] accompany you.' . . . 'and pray when you see my good friend Mr. Bentley, tell him that his patterns of Zaffre are not extraordinary.' This shows that the latter already undertook commissions for articles required in his friend's manufactory, and the way was thus led to a gradual acquirement of considerable knowledge on these subjects, and to an interest therein which was productive of great results.

Of his more important letters Mr. Wedgwood generally prepared a rough draft; and of these a few have fortunately reached our time. In one addressed to Sir William Meredith relative to the above-named elegant present 'which I shall immediately make that use of your generosity intends'—as also to some vases lent to model from—Mr. Wedgwood consults his patron on a subject which necessarily causes him and other potters great uneasiness. Approaching events in America were destined to nullify for a time the rise and success of infant manufactures; and a better knowledge of economic science would have taught Mr. Wedgwood that protective duties, or appeals to Parliament, are utterly inoperative for confining production and its necessary labour to a given area, provided that natural circumstances and a growing demand are favourable to development. But it was impossible to foresee; and Mr. Wedgwood, though in constant intercourse with able Necessarians like Priestley, Bentley, Darwin, Willet, Percival, and others, had but scanty knowledge of unvarying truths, which as yet were little more than the undeveloped theories of a few minds of the highest philosophic culture. 'Permit me, Sir,' he says, 'just to mention a circumstance of a more Public

nature, which greatly alarms us in this neighbourhood. The bulk of our particular manufactures are you know exported to foreign markets, for our home consumption is very trifling in comparison, to what is sent abroad; & the principal of these markets are the Continent & Islands of North America. To the Continent we send an amazing quantity of white stone-ware & some of the finer kinds, but for the Islands we cannot make anything to rich and costly. This trade to our Colonies we are apprehensive of losing in a few years, as they have set on foot some Potworks there already, and have at this time an agent amongst us hiring a number of our hands for establishing new Pottworks in South Carolina; having got one of our insolvent Master Potters there to conduct them. They have every material there, equal if not superior to our own, for carrying on that manufacture; and as the necessaries of life, and consequently the price of labour amongst us are daily advancing, it is highly probable that more will follow them, and join their brother artists and manufacturers of every Class, who are from all quarters taking a rapid flight indeed the same way! Whether this can be remedied is out of our sphere to know, but we cannot help apprehending such consequences from these emigrations as make us very uneasy for our trade and our Posterity—Your well known attention to the Arts and Commerce of y^{r} country, encourages me to give you this trouble.' Mr. Wedgwood would have smiled at his own fears, had some one told him that, at the date of a century from the period of his writing this, our export trade in earthenware with America would be multiplied a thousandfold, that it is still amongst our best foreign markets, and one to which the manufacturing firm he founded still contributes. No country

situated as America then was, and is now, with her civilisation thrust centuries back by the curse of blind and intemperate party strife and internecine war, can hope to gain perfection in an art which requires a high degree of previous and special culture, and a variety of contingent circumstances rarely to be found in combination. A country in this condition gains most by the export of raw materials, and the import of manufactured goods. This for a time will be the rule, if the natural laws of supply and demand are left unfettered by unjust and restrictive imposts. But though Sir William Meredith was thus unable to help his friend in a question of the kind, he does so to a most liberal extent in others. 'This last post,' writes Mr. Wedgwood under the date of April 3, 'bro^t^ me five pacquets from S^r^ Wm inclosing prints of different sorts which he is so obliging to employ his good taste in picking up for me at the Print-shops, he hath likewise sent me some orders from Sir George Savile to Gent^n^ of his acquaintance, & hath many more he says for me; & in order that I may work after the best models he hath sent me a dessert service of Dresden China to pattern from—How shall I make any returns at all adequate to this Generosity? When you see S^r^ Wm you will let him know I am at least sensible of his distinguishing favours.'

Hitherto we have seen Mr. Wedgwood working silently onwards, carrying out various great improvements in his art, and supplying the ordinary channels of trade; but unsolicitous of patronage unless it came to him through local associations, or the recommendation of admiring friends. In this he differed widely from the common type of men, who in that day acted and spoke as though no art or industry could be improved without the smile

of the great. But he had the unselfishness of genius. He looked more to the quality of his work, to the purposes it would serve, to its appreciation by others; in a word, he loved his art, and in the enthusiasm of perfecting it, all merely selfish ends were blotted out. In this was at once the source of his power and his success. He knew full well that the results produced in any art or industry are equal to the force brought into action, and that the patronage which comes before, instead of following work, is in its nature worthless. In this respect he belonged more to our generation than his own; for having laboured to invest the articles produced by his hand with an excellence and a taste hitherto unknown, he left the natural results to their own time and place of fulfilment. Hence the reader must not be surprised to learn, that the story of the presentation of a caudle-service to Queen Charlotte, on the occasion of the birth of the Prince of Wales in 1762, is a mere myth; very pretty to read, but utterly worthless as a fact in the life of the great Wedgwood. We will now give the real circumstances connected with Mr. Wedgwood's first introduction to royal favour from the letters which passed between him and his brother at this date; in the assurance that they place the great artist and his art in a far higher light than the long-received and hackneyed story could do. The truth reverses the whole matter. IT WAS PATRONAGE WHICH SOUGHT THE GREAT POTTER; NOT THE GREAT POTTER PATRONAGE. The Queen wanted a beautiful tea-service in cream-ware, some specimens of which she had seen in the houses of the nobility, and Mr. Wedgwood was the only one in the Staffordshire Potteries who, from ability to make it worthy of royal favour, was willing to undertake it. This fact, we think, is of great significance; if

only to show that, in the accomplishment of perfect work, it is the means and not the ends we should hold in view; and that man, like nature, at all times can produce undying consequences, if he be willing to face the preliminary difficulty, obscurity, and toil inherent to those courses of action which seek to create new effects beneficial to a country, a generation, or an art.

After a partial recovery from the illness already mentioned, and the return of his young nephew into Staffordshire, Mr. John Wedgwood meditated, as it appears, a trip to France. But his friends did not like the scheme, and dissuaded him therefrom. 'As to your going to France,' writes Mr. Wedgwood to him, 'I do not believe I can spare you out of London this summer, if business comes in for you at this rate, for instance—An ord^r from St James's for a service of Staffordshire ware about which I want to ask an hundred questions, and have never a mouth but yours in Town worth opening upon the subject—The ord^r came from Miss Deborah, alias Deb Chetwynd,[1] Sempstress and Laundress to the Queen, to Mr. Smallwood of Newcastle, who bro^t it to me (I believe because nobody else wo^d undertake it), & is as follows: —

[1] Every possible research has been made in relation to the real facts of Queen Charlotte's *first* patronage of Mr. Wedgwood; but nothing can be discovered bearing out the assertion of the presentation of a caudle-service, either at the Queen's accession, or on the occasion of the birth of the Prince of Wales. Little as the press then troubled itself with the record of social facts, unless they were of an infamous or a brutal character, yet considering that a present of Buckingham lace, by the then High Sheriff of the county, is noticed in the Annual Register of 1761, there can be no doubt that had any gift of Staffordshire pottery, of so elegant a nature as Mr. Wedgwood's cream-ware, been offered to the Queen, either then or in the subsequent year, some notice of it would have appeared. Moreover, had the Queen already had her 'Royal Potter,' her attendant (Miss Chetwynd) would have addressed Mr. Wedgwood in the first instance. The facts thus derived from these important letters are fully borne out by information Mr. Mayer received from his mother, who was an old friend and neighbour of Mr. Wedgwood. From him she learnt that the first ware he made for the Queen was a cream-coloured tea-service, decorated with green and gold. On the occasion of the first Royal accouchement *following* this patronage there can be no doubt, Mr. Wedgwood presented a caudle-service.

'A complete sett of tea things, with a gold ground & raised flowers upon it in green, in the same manner of the green flowers that are raised upon the *melons*, so it is wrote, but I suppose it sho^d be *melons*—The articles are 12 cups for Tea, & 12 saucers, a slop bason, sugar dish w^th cover and stand—Teapot & stand, spoon trea—

(Fig. 79.) CAMEO MEDALLION OF QUEEN CHARLOTTE.—MAYER COLLECTION.

Coffeepot, 12 Coffeecups, 6 p^r of hand candlesticks & six melons with leaves, 6 green fruit baskets and stands edged with gold—I have just began an Enamel work & am in great want of some gold powder such as is burnt in upon China. It is made by one Mr. Shenton (only) & sold by him at 7 guineas ℔ oz. Mr. Giles Enameler in Berwick St, old Soho, can tell you, where

Mr. Shenton lives, which is the best direction I can get. I sho[d] be glad to have a few pennyw[ts] by way of tryal—if it answers shall want large quantitys. Mr. Shenton may perhaps give you instructions about the best manner of using it & when I have his address will write farther to him & settle him a C[rt] in Lond[n] for w[t] gold I ord[r] in future. May send this small parc[l] along with some leaf gold I have ord[d] from Mr. Gifford in Maiden Lane, Wood St unless you find a quicker conveyance, you may conceal a little of this in a frank. Miss Chetwynds ord[r] must be done with this gold if burnt in. My post boy waits adieu. . . . Pray put on *the best suit of cloathes you ever had in your life*, & take the first opportunity of going to Court—Miss Chetwynd is Daughter to the Master of the Mint——What I would be glad to know from Miss Chetwynd is whether she expects the gold to be burnt in, as it is upon the Chelsea china, or secur'd with a varnish only, like the Birmingham waiters, and other Japan ware—If the saucers must have a Gold ground, both inside & out, & what colour the cups & other articles must be within, if a fine cream colour will do. Whether the flowers upon the cups &c. must be in alto relievo, or basso relievo—if the former whether that will not be very inconvenient for the saucers. it will be extreme difficult to execute. What size will be most agreeable for the teacups, & Teapot—& if there should not be a cream-jug & Jarrs. If the hand candlesticks and Melons must have a gold ground to match the tea things—or what sort & colour they must be.'[1]

Under the date of July 6, 1765, Mr. Wedgwood, in

[1] Josiah Wedgwood to Mr. John Wedgwood, at the sign of the Artichoke, Cateaton Street, London. There is no date to this letter beyond the post-mark, A. P. 17. But passages in subsequent and dated letters fully indicate the month and year.

again addressing his brother, thus refers to the same subject :—'I have to thank you for another letter . . . & am much oblig'd to you for your good offices with Miss Chetwynd—you may be sure my best endeavours will not be wanting to make the articles she orders as complete & elegant as possible, but suppose we fail in burning the gold on, must we in that case stove it on, and make the ware green withinside? Must the saucers and other articles be gilt any further on the outside than from the top edge to the foot?——I shall be very proud of the honour of sending a box of patterns to the Queen—amongst which I intend sending two sets of Vases, Cream colour, engine-turn'd, & printed, for which purpose nothing would be more suitable, than some copper plates I have by me. I can adapt the Vases so that the design and they will appear to be made for each other, & intended for Royalty—nor must you hint to the contrary—but I am one group or design short, which I have sketched out and inclos'd & desire you'l get it done by Wale—unless you know a better hand—It must be engrav'd—any of the print shops (Mr. Bowles in Cornhill in particular) will direct you to Wale or some other—the sooner I have it done & sent me—the sooner I shall be able to send the patterns.'

In making this memorable tea-service, as such it really was, many difficulties arose, which, to a man less resolute than Mr. Wedgwood, would have been insurmountable. His exquisite taste is not easily reconciled to the relative effects of green on a gold ground ; the process of gilding is an art which he has to slowly learn, for as yet he has never employed it in the decoration of his ware, and its use as a varnish has been hitherto confined to the japan trade of Birmingham, and as an enamel to the china-works of Chelsea, Bow, Worcester, and Plymouth ; he is fastidious

as to form and engine-work, and he is troubled with dilatory and incompetent workmen. There are difficulties too in getting engravings suitable to those he has in hand for the Queen's cream-coloured vases. 'I have received the plate and drawing,' he says in another undated letter to his brother, 'for which accept my best thanks. The execution of the plate is pretty well—but not equal to those I have to go with it—I do not like the design finishing at each end with a Tree, and both very nearly alike, it gives it a formality and stiffness which I sho^d like to avoid. . . . I am very busy every day preparing sprigs, handles, spouts, shapes, making experim^ts in burning in gold &c. &c. for the tea service, & from experience I can tell you that the sooner I make 'em, the more imperfect they will be. I have done a cup with the new sprigs in green, & gold and am very sorry and dissatisfy'd to find it does not look so well as I expected. The ground kills the green & gives the sprigs a kind of littleness I must endeavour to get over——Powder gold wo^d do the best if I knew how to polish it, after it is burnt. The . . . one Jenks who was a gilder in enamel at the Chelsea works, and is now at the Bow China work, if it wo^d not be too tedious, I wish you wo^d buy a cream colour enam^d cream Ewer, & get Jenks to gild all the spaces but the flowers &c. & burn the gold in, by which you'l see if he is capable of doing anything for me, & if he does it well he wo^d perhaps tell you how it is polished (I believe I could manage the laying of it on) for a little money. I believe it is neither a secret, or a very curious art, for women only are employ'd in it at Chelsea, you may perhaps find some of them out, w^h I must leave to you.' On July 22 he tells his brother, 'I am at work at the sprigs &c. night and day.' The engraved

plate for the cream-coloured vase has to be returned to London, for the figures are left-handed, and the trees at the end still in bad taste. 'I wo[d] have the Trees at each end put out,' he writes on July 29, '& let the design faint off to nothing, or if that cannot so well be done, a bush or two may do, but not to mount so high, as the Trees, nor both ends alike.' Meanwhile, with his usual persistent industry, he has been making experiments both as to the burning in and polishing the gold, and thus reports his progress in the same letter:—'I wrote to you about polishing our gold, but wo[d] not have you be at much trouble or expence about (it) for from some tryals I have made to day I hope to be able *in time* to accomplish it, but not I fear in time for the merry meal—If you sho[d] see Miss Chetwynd again pray do not say any thing more that may tend to raise her expectations of the T. service, as that may help to disappoint her.' He then proceeds to tell his brother of leaf gold of various hues which he has seen at his friend's Mr. Taylor of Birmingham, and inquires if it is to be had in England; and enclosed in the letter are samples of green and gold, the latter burnt in.

Early in August Mr. Wedgwood forwards some cream-colour services to London, in fulfilment probably of a Royal order, though the tea-service is but yet in an early stage of preparation. He has still difficulties with the burning in and burnishing the gold; 'burnishing,' as he explains, 'being a different operation to polishing;' and, probably with a view to help him to master these, he bids his brother 'buy and send ℔ coach Vol 1st of the Handmaid of the Arts published in 1758 for Nourse in the Strand.'[1] He

[1] This was a valuable book at the period it was issued, and probably afforded Mr. Wedgwood many useful hints as to arts serviceable to his

then proceeds: 'Must the Leaves for stands for the Melons be covered with gold on both sides—one side—or be left all greēn. I take for granted that the melons must be loose from the leaf. . . . And now as to the price of this ware! I foresee that if the gold must be laid on to have a full metalic appearance the price will be very high. Whether they may be deemed dear or not I cannot say, but sure the great Personage they are for wo^d have them perfect, & can afford to pay for them—but I wo^d rather not fix any price at all upon them if that wo^d be approv'd of—but farther on this subject another time.—I have made ready for the oven 3 melons, & hope to finish 3 or 4 cups and saucers to be fired bisket this week, which will be ready for gilding by the time I receive the gold, w^t little you sent is a great deal of it gone in experiments.'[1] A few days later he adds: 'I am just teazed of my life with dilatory, drunken, Idle, worthless workmen, which prevents my proceeding in the tea-service, to w^ch more sorts of workmen are necessary than one w^d imagine.'[2]

This is all that can be gathered on the subject. Between this last date of August 7, 1765, and November 25 in the same year, the letters which passed between the brothers have perished; and thus are lost to us some of the details of one of the most interesting episodes in the life of the great potter. It was important in many ways; as, in addition to the stimulus of royal favour, it cheered Mr. Wedgwood on to still more elaborate designs and

own. There was a more recent edition than the one he mentions—namely, that of 1764. In this is a section explanatory of the manufacture of soft porcelain, or *pâte tendre*, and many of the glazes and enamels useful to the potter. But as the glazes were chiefly the formulas used by the Delft potters, and translated from the Dutch, they could teach little to one who had already perfected a series of glazes of surpassing excellence.

[1] Josiah Wedgwood to Mr. John Wedgwood, August 2, 1765.

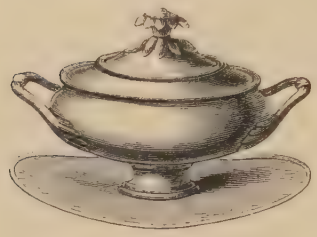
[2] August 7, 1765.

fresh experiments, and at once opened up to him the patronage of both the English and foreign nobility. One would like to know how the beautiful tea-service was received at court; whether Her Majesty thought it equal to the Dresden ware, which without doubt was the prototype of her royal order; and if any of those who frequented her presence, and who, like Horace Walpole, Lord Foley, and others, styled themselves patrons and judges of art, were aware that a man of true and original genius had set his hand upon the work? Two things we are alone certain of—that the tea-service in question was finished and sent to St. James's between the date of August 7 and November 25 in this year; and that, on this and other relative business, Mr. John Wedgwood went frequently to court. During this autumn both Mr. and Mrs. Wedgwood were in London. At the last date mentioned some ware seems to have been in hand for the young princes; for Mr. Wedgwood writes: 'Mr. Cowards carvings are come safe to hand, thanks to Mrs. Blake and your care. I wrote a letter to Mr. Carter by my Bro^r^ Wedgwood [1] to desire he wo^d^ send the Mitre and Crosier and Ich Dien[2] by the first coach, for as they have been mention'd at St James's a delay in sending them to the young Princes will be Petit Treason. . . . Pray let me know by first (post) w^t^ S^r^ W^m^ and Mrs. Chetwynd say to my l^rs^, for 'till then I do not know w^t^ to write to my correspond^ts^—may observe to S^r^ W^m^ &c. w^n^ you have opportunity that I shall send the table services to them only who write particularly for them & hope I can

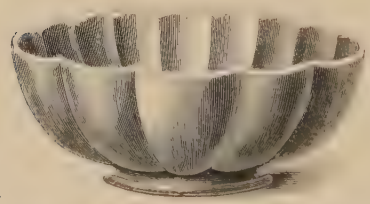
[1] Mr. Thomas Wedgwood, of the Overhouse.

[2] The latter was the motto attached to the crest of the Prince of Wales. The mitre and crosier were the arms of the Bishop of Osnaburgh; George III., at the solicitation of the Queen, having bestowed this bishopric on his second son Frederick before he was christened.

prevail on these to keep the ware out of the public view in their shops, & farther the shops must sell them dearer than their friends are supply'd with this article.' [1] The table-services referred to were doubtless copies of those sent to St. James's by royal order, in the interval between August and November. Admiring as she must have done the exquisite tea-service Mr. Wedgwood had prepared for her, it appears that her Majesty, upon its receipt, desired to have a table-service of the same ware, though in a plainer style. Patterns of the several pieces were sent for inspection, and approved of with the exception of the plate, on the edge of which was impressed a barleycorn pattern, each barleycorn being divided from the rest by a band or rib. The ribs were retained, but the barleycorns omitted. This smoothness of surface added greatly to the beauty of the plate; the form and exquisite colour being in themselves decorative effects in the highest taste. The tureens, compotiers, sauce-bowls, coffee-cups, and other articles, were elegant in shape; the annexation of the *ansæ* or handles in the soup tureen being remarkable, as the reader will observe in the accompanying specimen, for their good proportion and beauty of effect. This was called the Queen's pattern. The



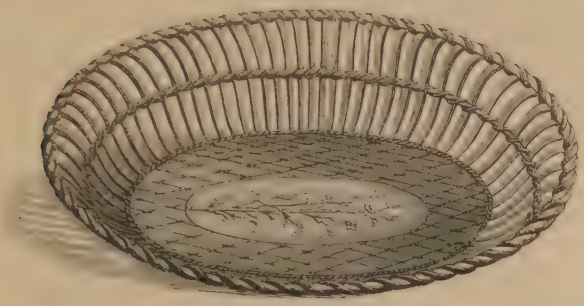
(Fig. 80.) SOUP TUREEN, CREAM-COLOUR WARE. MAYER COLLECTION.



(Fig. 81.) COMPOTIER, CREAM-COLOUR WARE. MAYER COLLECTION.

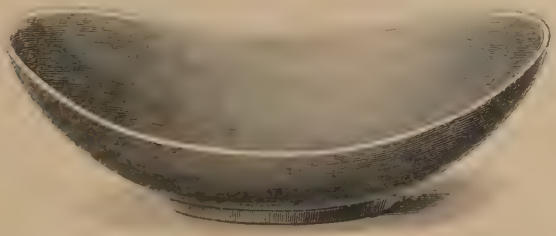
[1] Josiah Wedgwood to Mr. John Wedgwood, November 25, 1765.

royal pattern was simply a variation in the form of the chief pieces, and in the edge of the plate, which, at the



(Fig. 82.) TWIG BASKET, CREAM-COLOUR WARE.—BATEMAN COLLECTION.

(Fig. 83.) CREAM-BOWLS OR ICE-PAILS, CREAM-COLOUR WARE.—MAYER COLLECTION.



(Fig. 84.) VEGETABLE DISH OR BREAD BASKET, CREAM-COLOUR WARE. MAYER COLLECTION.

King's desire, was left perfectly plain. It was thus more in true taste, and more adapted to the purposes it had to serve. It is not improbable that Mr. Wedgwood himself suggested

to His Majesty this absolute plainness of surface in the principal section of the plate. The dinner-services he manufactured were always, in this respect, objects of great personal care; and the rims underwent many modifications at his hands, particularly as to width. For this, as for all

(Fig. 85.) CAMEO MEDALLION OF GEORGE III.—DR. HOOKER'S COLLECTION.

he did in his art, he could give a philosophic reason: thus showing, as we have before noticed, the depth and truth of Mr. Wedgwood's intellect, and that, like all other great artists, he took much which was most effective in form and principle from analogies the most remote. Of this, in

relation to so common an article as the plate, we have an exquisite instance yet to give.[1]

During this autumn of 1765 Mr. John Wedgwood had a busy life, in attending at St. James's and at the houses of the nobility. 'Dear Brother,' writes Mr. Wedgwood, 'I have but just time to desire you'l read, seal, and deliver the inclos'd & debit my acc^{t} for powder, dress, & attendance. Some of the subjects are interesting to me, & at other places they will perhaps pay you the money, particularly S^{r} Charles Coote which are the reasons I have troubled you with this——I have not time to send Mrs. Chetwynd's general Acc^{t} till Saturday's post, so you need not deliver her L^{r} till you rec^{ve} that—You'l see I have sent you a sort of a bill upon S^{r} Charles, but hope he will give you no occasion to present it. Please to show S^{r} Charles the pencil'd desert plate. he talked of having a desert service. I have various Elegant patterns of Compotiers done in the same way for desert services, the price of the plate sent is 18^{d}. may shew it to any body else, if S^{r} Wm[2] is not in town—Mr. Stevens at the Admiralty will frank the letters to him.'

Of Miss Deborah Chetwynd, or Mrs. as she was styled, little, beyond the fact that she was a daughter of the Master of the Mint, is known. Her father, William Richard Chetwynd, succeeded his two elder brothers as 3rd Viscount Chetwynd in 1767. He had been successively member of Parliament for Stafford and Plymouth, envoy at Genoa, and a Lord of the Admiralty; and upon the coalition of the ministry in 1742, he was made Master of the Mint, which post he seems to have held till he succeeded to his brother's title. He was the known

[1] Letter to Becket, bookseller, in the Strand, Oct. 20, 1766. Mayer MSS.
[2] Meredith.

and much-trusted confidant of Lord Bolingbroke, and the dearest friend of Lady Suffolk. In early life he was familiarly called 'Black Will,' as also 'Oroonoko Chetwynd,' from his dark complexion. He died in 1770, three years after his accession to the title, at a very advanced age.

Miss Deborah Chetwynd was his third daughter. The duties of her appointment, which she received on the Queen's marriage, and retained some years, were of course merely nominal.[1] As a native of Staffordshire, she was undoubtedly proud of the taste and genius of her countryman; and her unvarying kindness and graceful courtesy in furthering his interests both at court and with the nobility place her character in a most amiable light. She was also a woman of education and cultivated taste, and seems to have used with great tact and judgment her privileged mediumship between royalty and the artist. Her services to Mr. Wedgwood were fully and deeply appreciated.

But quite apart from royal favour and patronage there was an under-current of kindness and appreciation in the local aristocracy — the Gowers, the Egertons, the Chetwynds, the De Greys, and others — which ought not to pass unnoticed, and which, at this early day, must have been very acceptable to Mr. Wedgwood's feelings. It is now a real honour, to these English families of the good old stock, that they bought and ate from his exquisite

[1] Annual Register, 1761. More than one member of the very ancient family of Chetwynd had been connected with the Court from the accession of Queen Anne. From 1714 to 1728 John Chetwynd, Esq., was a Commissioner of Trade and Plantations. He procured this place by bribing Madame Kielmansegge, mistress of George II.—Diary of Lady Cowper, p. 31.

The only reference to Mrs. Chetwynd by Horace Walpole is in a letter to Lord Strafford. 'My humble duty to my Lady Strafford and all her pheasants. I have just made two cascades: but my naiads are fools to Mrs. Chetwynd or my Lady Sondes, and don't give me a gallon of water in a week.'—Walpole's Letters (Cunningham's edit.), p. 112.

cream-coloured ware, and spoke of it, and recommended it warmly to their guests and friends, whilst as yet its manufacturer was but little known. Writing to his brother in the summer of this year, Mr. Wedgwood tells him that 'Dr. Swan dined with L^d^ Gower this week; after dinner your Bro^r^ Joss^s^ Pot works were the subject of conversation for some time, the Cream colour services in particular. I believe it was his L^d^ship said that nothing of the sort could exceed them for a fine glaze &c.' In a letter of a few days later, the subject is again referred to. 'I just hinted to you that cream colour ware was a subject of conversation at L^d^ Gowers Table. Among other things his L^d^sh^p^ said that the late L^d^ Bolingbroke collected all the various modeled earthenware he could in France which were bro^t^ over to England & that it wo^d^ be worth my while to go to London on purpose to see it—As his L^d^ship was so kind to mention a thing of that sort at his table I dare say he wo^d^ give me a proper introduction for that purpose & this will be one inducement for my coming to London—I am to wait upon his L^d^ship at Trentham this week & hope the Duke of Bridgewater will be there, when you shall hear further from me.'[1] At the distance of little more than a week, we hear of a visit to the Brick-House Works:—'I have just had the honour of the D. of Marlbr^o^, L^d^ Gower, L^d^ Spencer, & others at my works—They have bo^t^ some things & seem'd much entertain'd & pleas'd—The Gent^n^ abovement^d^ wonder I have not a wareh^o^ in Lond^n^ where patt^ns^ of all the sorts I make may be seen.'[2]

The plan thus suggested by his noble visitors had for some time previous been a matter of thought to Mr.

[1] Letter to Mr. John Wedgwood, dated July 29, 1765.

[2] Letter to Mr. John Wedgwood, August 7, 1765.

Wedgwood, for the room or small warehouse in Cateaton Street, which had no resident clerk or porter, and which seems to have been only used as a storehouse for shop and exported goods, was quite unfitted for a show-room for more delicate and exquisite wares, requiring protection from dust, as also abundant light; nor was its situation, in a narrow street in the heart of the city, likely to attract fashionable visitors, especially ladies. Mr. Wedgwood was quite aware that, should he succeed in pleasing the royal taste in respect to the tea-things, abundant patronage would follow; and he had written thus to his brother, only a few days previously, still more explicitly on this subject. 'You know I have often mention'd having a man in London the greatest part of the year shewing patterns, taking orders, settling acc^ts &c. &c. & as I increase my work, & throw it still more in the ornamental way I shall have the greater need of such assistance & sh^d be glad to have your advice upon it— Wo^d £50 a year keep such a person in London & pay rent for 2 Rooms (both back rooms & St Giles's wo^d be as good as St James's) about so much I think it might answer for me to give—If your Clark, w^n the place comes' (Mr. John Wedgwood was at this time in treaty with some commercial company for one of its most important posts), 'hath not full employm^t a thing of this might make a little appendage to his salary.'[1] Such were the simplicity of the ideas, the humble beginning which led in due course, as we shall see, to the establishment in Newport Street, and the far larger one in Greek Street, with, for a time, its enamelling works at Chelsea, its staff of clerks, and its long list of enamellers, modellers, and artists. Such were the first suggestions out of which

[1] Letter to Mr. John Wedgwood, dated August 2, 1765.

grew a perfect shrine of pure taste and classic art, to which foreigners, even more than Englishmen, resorted with eager steps. And such, in all things, were the advances of this illustrious man. Patient, steadfast, humble, simple, unconscious of half his own greatness; and yet by this very simplicity, patience, and steadfastness, displaying the high quality of his moral and intellectual characteristics, even whilst insuring that each step was in the right direction, and firmly planted.

Mr. Wedgwood's almost daily intercourse with the local aristocracy, on questions connected with Canal Navigation, led necessarily to a certain amount of patronage; and this in some small measure made up for the personal self-sacrifice he necessarily incurred in furthering this great and patriotic scheme. 'I should have wrote to you sooner,' he tells his brother, 'but have been waiting upon his G— the D— of Bridgewater with plans &c. respecting Inland Navigation. Mr. Sparrow went along with me. We were most graciously rec^{d}, spent about 8 hours in his G—s comp^{y}, & had all the assurances of his concurrence with our designs that we could wish. His G— gave me an ord^{r} for the completest Table service of Cream colour that I could make, shewed us a Roman Urn 1500 years old at least made of red china, & found by his workmen in Castlefield near Manchester——After his G— had dismiss'd us, we had the honour and pleasure too of sailing in his Gondola nine miles along his canal, thro' a most delightful vale to Manchester.'[1] This instance of the Duke's good taste and patronage—and it is far from being a solitary one as regards Mr. Wedgwood—quite contradicts the assertion that his Grace was dead to every refined taste and influence. His early disappointment,

[1] July 6, 1765.

his necessary absorption in the vast and complicated scheme of Canal Navigation, which his sound judgment and adventurous spirit had happily for his country inaugurated, and his daily intercourse with men of practical rather than refined understanding, all tended to lead his thoughts and inclinations wide astray from the pursuits and tastes incident to his rank. That these were latent rather than absent, is thus evinced; for whilst thus struggling with the many pecuniary difficulties of his great undertaking, he was patronising, so far as present ability went, the genius and industry of his friend Josiah Wedgwood; and it was still more powerfully shown by his collecting together, when the success of his navigation afforded the necessary wealth, a gallery of paintings, the like of which had not been seen in England since the dispersion of that of Charles I. From all we thus freshly gather from the Wedgwood correspondence, Francis Egerton, Duke of Bridgewater, seems to have been a kind man and a true friend—a little wayward and eccentric in some things; but with an instinctive perception of truth and genius in others, that led necessarily to his keen enjoyment of the society of two such men as Brindley and the great potter. What an illustrious trio it was, as they thus supped and smoked their pipes together in the old timbered hall at Worsley, or the more palatial building at Trentham—their chief talk about Inland Navigation, with now and then a little diversion on the subject of cream-colour ware or Roman antiquities, which only made the subject of the 'Grand Scheme' still more weighty and considered when it was renewed!

As might be expected, commissions for cream-coloured services flowed in thick and fast, as soon as the Queen's

patronage was fully known. Lady Broughton has a dessert service; and in the month of November, orders come from the 'Firme Man of War,' 'the Duke of Grafton, Richard Hopkins Esq., Sir Charles Coote, General Honeywood, Mr. Stevens,' and others. Sir William Meredith is instrumental in procuring most of these. 'I rec^{d} from him in Town (orders for) eight services (the) amo^{t} of the whole abo^{t} £60, & S^{r} W^{m} says in his last letter "you had best get your Bro^{r} to take the bills & receive the money on delivery." This advice is I think too wholesome to be slighted & indeed I do not want these great folks (to) know that the Potters ever do give any credit at all. A word to the wise is enough.'[1]

During October and a part of November in this year, Mr. and Mrs. Wedgwood were in London, having lodgings in Laurence Lane, at the house of the Messrs. Berry, who were Manchester warehousemen and friends of Mr. Bentley. They paid more than one visit to Turnham Green, where they were very hospitably entertained by Griffiths, the editor of the 'Monthly Review,' Mr. Wedgwood in the intervals being deeply engaged in duties of the most varied kind. He transacted business with Miss Chetwynd at St. James's; was honoured probably by more than one royal interview; and, favoured by the introduction of Lord Gower, Sir William Meredith, Sir George Saville, and others, visited the houses of many of the nobility to receive their orders, or to inspect or make drawings from precious and unrivalled works of art. 'I have been three days hard and close at work,' he writes to Mr. Bentley on October 7, 'takeing patt^{ns} from a set of French China at the Duke of Bedford's, worth at least £1500, the most elegant things I ever saw, and am this evening to wait and

[1] Letter to Mr. John Wedgwood, dated November 25, 1765.

be waited on by designers, modelers, &c.' On their way home, we find Mr. Wedgwood and his wife at the Duke of Marlborough's. 'We spent half a day very agreeably at Blenheim House & in the evening went with the steward his daughter & four sons to see a play at Woodstock, but alass, we had seen the London Theatre too lately to have much enjoym^t^ from poverty, rags, and blunders on the Woodstock stage.'[1]

The business of the intended Navigation occupied much of Mr. Wedgwood's attention during his stay in London. A new edition of Mr. Bentley's pamphlet was in hand, as well as the engraving of a map or plan; and there can be little doubt, besides advertising and opening subscriptions, that Lord Gower, the Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Bridgewater, Sir William Meredith, Sir George Saville, and others, were, at the solicitations of Mr. Wedgwood, using their influence thus early to promote the great design amongst their parliamentary supporters. Nor was this incessant turmoil and occupation all-absorbent. Mr. Wedgwood had yet a tender care for the interests of his more private friends. 'Yesterday I spent at Turnham Green & did your message to our friend Ralpho. If you mean the letter respecting Mr. Priestley's Publication, Mr. Griffiths sent it to the manager of the St James's Chronicle with a letter acquainting him it came from Mr. Bentley, a sensible and ingenious correspond^t^ of theirs & desired it might be published, & he hath sought it sorrowing in every paper since, till a few days agoe he was in comp^y^ with Mr. Baldwin & desir'd to know the reason why it was not inserted, & rec^d^ for answer that they did not choose to meddle in disputes betwixt

[1] Letter, dated Burslem, November 11, 1765, to Mr. Thomas Bentley, merchant, Liverpool.

Reviewers and Authors, or their friends, for if they did that their papers wo[d] be filled with little else.' 'But there is, it seems a more potent reason for their refusing your paper, for the manager of the London Chronicle hath particular connections with the Critical Reviewers—But be comforted, we will rescue the paper out of their hands, & try it in another quarter, unless you forbid it by return.' [1]

Though defeated in his generous design of thus assisting Dr. Priestley by a review in the leading paper of the day, he still co-operates with his distant friend in urging the apparently reluctant Griffiths to use the criticism in some other literary quarter than the 'Monthly Review,' to which the latter, as editor, had supplied a notice of Dr. Priestley's work. 'I have not read the Monthly Review for Aug[t] or Sept[r], & therefore have not seen the Review of Mr. Priestley's work. indeed the truth is, I have scarcely read anything at all, or thought of anything at all, but Pottmaking & navigating, and when it will be otherwise with me, I cannot tell, however I shall mention what you say on this subject to Mr. Griffiths, and unless he does it, will let you know, what he hath to say for himself.' There is little doubt that political reasons were the cause of this reluctance on the part of Griffiths to serve the friends who, so far as hospitality and the blandishment of words could go, were high in his favour. He was not the man to imperil his gains, or his patrons, by advocating, in any possible quarter where they could give offence, opinions diametrically opposed to the kingly and ministerial purpose of enforcing prerogatives that in too many cases were little short of despotic. The work alluded to was 'An Essay on a Course of Liberal Education for

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, October 7, 1765.

Civil and Active Life,' and to this was appended a 'Chart of Biography.'[1] The tenor of Dr. Priestley's Essay was not only to recommend a system of liberal education for young men designed for situations in civil and active life, but to prove by reasoning, confirmed by facts, that education, if enforced and undertaken by the State, as advocated in a treatise then recently published, would be inimical to civil and religious liberty, and to the natural rights of parents; though at the same time he made it evident that there are certain principles, founded on what we may justly style the primary laws of our nature, which must supply the groundwork of education, if such is to be conducive to, or to uphold, civil and religious liberty in a state, or produce any high degree of culture in the individual.[2] This Essay led eventually to that on 'Government,'[3] a treatise as remarkable in itself as for the effect it had upon the then youthful mind of Jeremy Bentham. Already a friend to popular rights, it seems to have led him to their consideration under a still wider view; as also to the advocacy of intelligible and equal laws, rendered efficient by prompt, impartial, and inexpensive administration. Relatively to the period, Dr. Priestley's views were no doubt sound; as, could government have controlled the education of the people, small as was then the amount, and barbarous as was the formula, it would have enforced the teaching of doctrines inimical alike to the constitution of the country and to the well-being of the individual. Under

[1] A slight sketch of Dr. Priestley's 'Chart of Biography' appeared in the last page of the 'Monthly Review' for February 1765. The work on Education was noticed in the Review for September 1765. Griffiths's method was reviewing made easy. Obliged to please his friends, he remarks that Dr. Priestley's work is 'a spirited and sensible performance,' but adds, 'his expressions in some passages have been too sanguine and unguarded,' and that his (Dr. Priestley's) style 'is not so good as that of the rev. author whose opinions on education he has criticised.'

[2] Works, vol. xxiv.

[3] Published in 1768.

the social conditions and with the culture of another century, he was sufficiently a Necessarian to have seen, that evil in all its forms being directly or remotely the effect of ignorance, the point is not one for option or caprice, so far as regards such primary knowledge as invests the individual with the power to understand what tends to his elevation or to his debasement in the social scale. More than this governments cannot effect, nor indeed should assume.

It is deeply interesting thus to disinter, after a century's oblivion, facts which, though seemingly insignificant, add in reality such substantial fame to Wedgwood's memory. We shall regard him henceforth, let us hope, as something more than a great potter. We see now for the first time the breadth and scope of that noble intellect which, directed by education and circumstances into other channels, would have insured him eminence as a legislator or a philosopher. Not content with calling Priestley his friend, we find him doing whatever he could to give publicity to his works; and he has thus the merit of having lent assistance to opinions which, in their silent and reflex operation upon more than one generation of great writers and great thinkers, have had results so precious in our own day, in the shape of legal, educational, and civil reforms.

Here and there we get slight but interesting glimpses of Mr. Wedgwood's family. His aged mother is still alive, and, off and on throughout this year of 1765, is in indifferent health. 'Bro^{r} Wedgwood,' he tells his brother John in a letter dated Burslem, November 25, 1765, 'will have told you that my mother was not well when he left home. She is no better—but am afraid rather worse.' Earlier in the year he has thus spoken of her, in that

lively spirit of banter he was so fond of employing when addressing his more intimate relatives and friends. His brother was at that time, as we have seen, meditating a trip to France, and in a letter addressed to the sign of the Artichoke in Cateaton Street, and dated July 6, he thus refers to it :—'Your mother sends her love to you with her blessing, provided you do not take her son John into

(Fig. 86.) BIG HOUSE, BURSLEM.

France; she is not willing to trust him with that false hearted People, and hopes he will not be so hardy to venture himself amongst them, but rather come and visit his friends in Staffordshire. I cannot help thinking the advice is good & hope it will meet with due attention.' In a letter to Bentley written in the August of this year, chiefly on Navigation affairs, there is the following para-

graph. The word 'mother' in it is undoubtedly a mere colloquial term applied to some homely woman of their acquaintance who had fallen into distressed circumstances.[1] 'Pray make yourself and fr^ds ready for a march to London. I will meet you there on Monday next, and we will see what can be done for our distressed mother.' This is probably the true interpretation, as Mr. Wedgwood's mother had a small independence secured upon her eldest son's estate on which to live; and her sons John and Josiah were men too honourable and generous to consult or appeal to even a dear friend like Bentley, on a point so sacred to them as a difficulty or pecuniary care affecting their only parent. If it did relate to her, it probably concerned one of her prodigal children.

In the same vein of banter, we have the announcement of an intended marriage:—'A voice this moment breaks in upon me with News—News—News—and what do you think it is? Why truly the marriage writeings are makeing between my unckle Thomas and my Cousin Molly, both of venerable memory, this may serve as *a Choice Drop of Comfort to Old Maids & Batchelors* & I hope it will have its proper effect—It is further whispered in my ear by a Voice which allways gives me pleasure, that the chief stumbling block to this marriage was removed when she secured a third person for her own.'[2]

In the same letter we have a passage referring to young Byerley which shows the prudential care with which

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[1] In writings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the term is often so applied. Izaak Walton thus uses it; and in this sense it is even yet colloquially applied in country districts.

[2] This was Mr. Thomas Wedgwood, of the Big House; Mr. Wedgwood's uncle by marriage. He was at this time fifty-two years old, and his intended wife—the eldest daughter of Dr. Thomas Wedgwood, jun.—forty-six. He survived his marriage eleven years, dying in April 1776. His wife died in July 1781, aged sixty-two years.

Mr. Wedgwood watched the lad's improvement :—'Tom appears, or at least appears very well satisfy'd in his situation, and I have never hinted anything to him of my knowing what passed in London on that subject. I sho^d have no objection to giving him handsome wages, but I am firmly persuaded it wo^d be a real injury to him, for at present he hath not the least notion of the value of money, nor w^d he keep a farthing any longer than an opportunity offer'd of parting with it. I sho^d be glad to know of your advice in this respect.'

The deep affection existing between the brothers is thus distinctly alluded to in reference to some omissions in answering letters on the part of the busy potter : —'Am I not teazing you with my scrawls every week? and sometimes every post? and sho^d have no objection to writing oftener still, if Journeys, Navigations, and other things did not prevent me. You know I do not want inclination—you know that ever since I have been capable of distinguishing, I have had the truest and most affectionate regards for you, & am sure you have allways given me sufficient reason to believe that our affection was mutual; therefore do not talk of my forgeting such a Brother and friend, as you have ever been to me, nor of my being forgotton by you—I cannot bear to say or think anything more about it.' In the same letter he again tempts him into Staffordshire, for the recovery of his health, in preference to his staying in the environs of London, where Mr. John Wedgwood seems to have made a trial of some chalybeate water, and of breakfasts supplemented by draughts of new milk :—'The latter part of your letter delights me greatly as your poetical description of Groves and Springs, the feather'd Choir &c. &c., indicates the flow of spirits you enjoyed at the time of writeing it, & let me

tell you that a pint of new milk & a Role & half a Role by way of *finishing* a breakfast shews a tolerable good natured stomach, at least we should think so in the country. But I am afraid by your acc^t^ of this new chalybeat Inn & the Comp^y^ who resort to it[1] we are not to have the pleasure of your company in Staffordshire this summer—this I can by no means consent to—we have chalybeats with us, & new milk too, for the very day I knew your quantity, we sold our barren Cow, in order to buy a new milch one, & now come as soon (as) you will, there will be enough for us all—Sally says your neice Sukey is worth your coming 150 miles to see, but she may see & talk like a Mother. however we do expect to see you some part of the summer amongst us, & the sooner the pleasanter.'[2] Thus induced, Mr. John Wedgwood paid his Staffordshire visit, and in the month of November of the same year we have these indications that he was still the object of his relatives' tender care:—'I have sent you a Hare and a couple of cocks by to day's coach directed for you at the Artichoke, the Hare is burnt on the hind leg with Ɨ + W to prevent its being chang'd, the Cocks are tyed to its fore legs.' A few days later we come upon signs of Christmas gifts:—'As you talk of sending down a box, I must just hint to you that sister Willet's little Lasses will go to bed without their nightcaps soon if they do not rec^ve^ an old shirt from their unckle. They send love & duty from the Bank.[3] Your cousin Sally bids me send her best love (next to her

[1] This description may refer to the wells at Hampstead, though its inns and places of public resort had long previously been famous.

[2] Mr. Wedgwood to his brother, at the sign of the Artichoke, Cateaton Street, London, May 29, 1765.

[3] This was the name of Mr. Willet's residence. There was fishing in its vicinity, as Mr. John Wedgwood had been invited thither for this purpose during the summer under consideration.

husband's or so) to you & tell you she was providing some pork pyes & will now send the puddings along with them for y^r^ X mas fare before the holydays.'

By this date, Mr. Bentley's trade in earthenware, chiefly for export, had become very considerable. Early in July Mr. Wedgwood had thus written to him:—'This serves just to acknowledge the rec^t^ of your two last very acceptable lr^s^ & to ask if I may send 10 crates of your ord^rs^ ℔ Land which will be ready on Monday next—the Carr^e^ is 3/ ℔ hund^d^ by Land—you know the expence by water is about half so much, but the stealage and breakage on the River is often much more than the difference of expence in the Carr^e^ & you will stand the best chance for having them in time.'[1] Some idea of Mr. Bentley's removal from Liverpool seems already to have occurred to his friend; as, during Mr. Wedgwood's stay in London, he thus refers to the matter:—'My brother is now with me, & it is very certain that if you wo^d^ come & fix in London, & enter a second time into the holy estate of Matrimony that you might choose your Lady, have your Chariot, lead the world in a string, & do what seemeth good in your own eyes. By the same authority I mention this, every wife, maid, and widow that hath seen Mr. Bentley in London join in this opinion.' This testimony to Mr. Bentley's handsome person and polished manners will be further confirmed, when, as the London partner of Mr. Wedgwood, he entertains his morning audiences of royal personages, duchesses, and other noble ladies, with descriptions of the exquisite ware which adorns the show-rooms of Newport Street and Greek Street, Soho.

Whilst thus Mr. Wedgwood's fortunes made steady

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, July 11, 1765.

progress, those of some of the old local aristocracy, whose sole vocation had been to spend and not to earn, had the hand of ruin laid upon them. During his early years of business Mr. Wedgwood had joined others, as we have seen, in a humble petition to Sir Nigel Gresley, Bart.—one of the lords of the manor of Burslem—for a plot of land whereupon to build a Schoolhouse. Now, five years later, he thus informs his brother:—'Sally and I are taking a ride to look at poor S^r^ Nigil's goods &c. which are to be sold in a fortnight—he hath left Knipersley with his family, & it is much feared his affairs will never suffer his return.' Sir Nigel well deserved this generous pity as he was an ingenious and public-spirited man, though too prone to embark in speculations that were little likely to be productive.[1] He was one of Brindley's early patrons; the future famous engineer having erected for him in 1752 a curious water-engine at Clifton, near Manchester, for the purpose of draining coal-mines. This ingenious contrivance saved Sir Nigel an enormous annual expense. It was Brindley's first experiment in tunneling, as the water for the working of this engine was brought from the river Irwell by a subterranean channel nearly 600 yards long, cut through the solid rock; the wheel which worked the pumps being fixed in a chamber thirty feet below the surface of the ground.

[1] The fortunes of the family seem subsequently to have been retrieved. Miss Seward refers to a splendid archery meeting, which was held in 1791, at the seat of Sir Nigel Gresley, at Drakelow, in Staffordshire.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

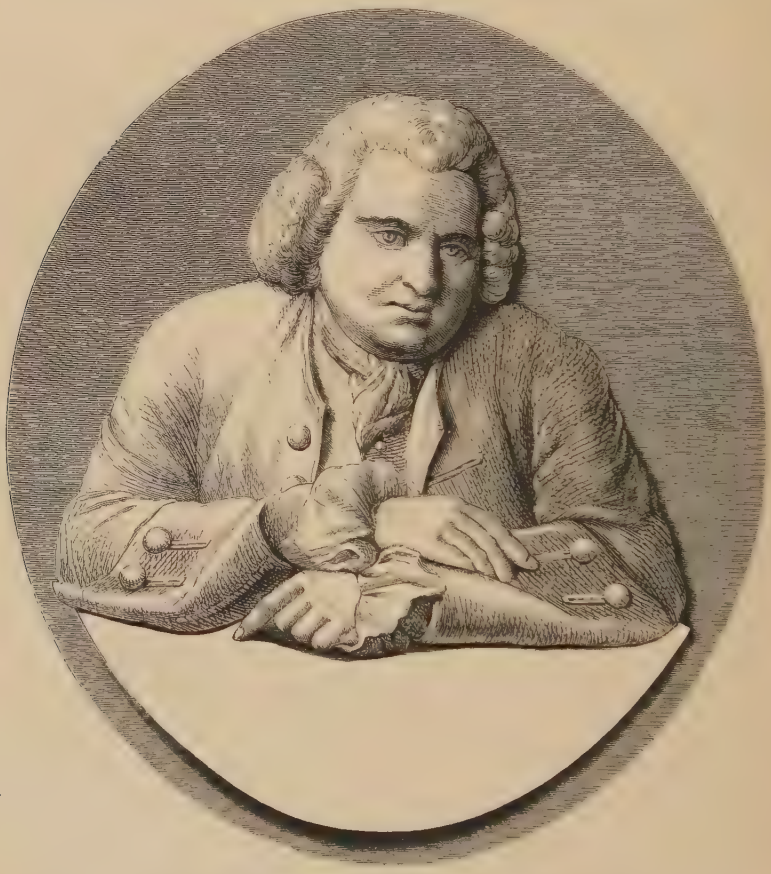
DR. DARWIN GREATER AS A PHILOSOPHER THAN A POET—HIS THEORIES IN ADVANCE OF HIS AGE—HIS FAME AS A PHYSICIAN —HIS INCESSANT OCCUPATION—HIS HOSPITALITY—HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH JOSIAH WEDGWOOD—ITS INTELLECTUAL CHARACTER—DARWIN'S MECHANICAL CONTRIVANCES FOR HIS FRIEND—PROGRESS OF THE TRENT AND MERSEY NAVIGATION—MR. BENTLEY'S PAMPHLET —ITS CRITICS—MR. GARBETT—LORD GOWER'S ACCESSIBILITY AND GENEROUS AID—THE ANIMOSITY OF THE PROPRIETORS OF THE RIVER NAVIGATIONS—MR. WEDGWOOD'S ADMIRABLE TACT AS A CRITIC—HIS VISIT TO LONDON—HIS ILLNESS BOTH THERE AND ON HIS RETURN TO BURSLEM—MR. BENTLEY'S PROPOSAL FOR CARRYING THE CANAL DIRECT TO LIVERPOOL—NEGOTIATIONS AS TO UNITING THE GRAND TRUNK AND BRIDGEWATER CANALS—MEETING AT WOLSELEY BRIDGE—DIFFICULTIES ATTENDING THE PRELIMINARY EXPENSES—THE PETITION DESPATCHED TO LONDON—REFERRED TO A COMMITTEE—WEDGWOOD'S, BENTLEY'S, AND BRINDLEY'S EVIDENCE IN FAVOUR OF THE CANAL—THE BILL PASSES BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, AND RECEIVES THE ROYAL ASSENT—MR. WEDGWOOD'S RETURN TO BURSLEM—THE COUNT DE LAURAGUAIS.

CHAPTER X.

THE STRUGGLES AND TRIUMPH OF A GREAT CAUSE.

AMONGST the eminent men who for many years were attached to Mr. Wedgwood by the ties of an intimate and unreserved friendship, a very prominent place must be assigned to Erasmus Darwin, one of the most skilful physicians of his day, and to all intents one of its profoundest thinkers. Indeed, the majority of his theories and opinions were very far in advance of the age in which he lived; and though our own does not endorse the judgment of his contemporaries in relation to his poetical skill, we apportion to him, what is in fact, a truer and higher fame, that of having advanced the philosophical culture of the eighteenth century. The very daring of his ideas made him in many things incomprehensible to his generation. But we, who, happily, have realised as facts what then existed as mere philosophical, and too often unappreciated theories, can but honour the man who was alike their advocate and prophet. He inculcated temperance when intemperance was all but a universal sin; he foretold the triumphs of steam; he advanced the cause of scientific medicine, and still more that of scientific agriculture, through example as well as theory; he made 'guesses at truth' in botany, which further research has confirmed; he advocated the social rights of man, and,

of more importance still as matters then stood, a more universally kind treatment of the dumb creatures around us, regarding them, with truly philosophical judgment, as only a little lower than ourselves in the scale of creation. It is something for a man to be equal to his age; but it is



(Fig. 87.) BAS-RELIEF MEDALLION OF DR. DARWIN.—DR. HOOKER'S COLLECTION.

much more if he be able to carry his ideas to a point so far beyond as to admit only of realisation under a higher culture. In this, therefore, consisted the genius and merits of the great Lichfield doctor.

It is not exactly known at what date the acquaintance-

ship between him and Mr. Wedgwood commenced, but probably very soon after Dr. Darwin had settled in Lichfield in 1756. If even in some degree convalescent, Mr. Wedgwood was at this period in a deplorable state of weakness, arising from the long and severe illness he had had whilst Wheildon's partner; and it is not unlikely that the young physician, who, from the extraordinary success attending a few weeks' practice, had risen into sudden fame, was consulted as to the means of insuring his permanent recovery. If not this, we know that he was always called in on occasions of those periodical and often alarming attacks of illness which Mr. Wedgwood was, as we shall see, subject to, prior to the amputation of his leg in May 1768. Thus known to each other, the acquaintanceship soon warmed into friendship; and when, in March 1765, we catch our first glimpse of Dr. Darwin in Mr. Wedgwood's correspondence, they were clearly old and familiar friends.

He had by this time become a man of great note throughout the midland counties. His practice had been eminently successful. He had, in fact, revolutionised the art of the physician by discarding quackery, and by founding the methods he used for the recovery of his patients upon the varying necessities of the case rather than on the stereotyped formulæ of the pharmacopœia. With the accustomed daring of genius, he had introduced new medicines, and used old ones in cases that astounded his more timorous brethren. To him routine was nothing, the necessities and circumstances of the case before him everything; and thus, by the simple observation of facts, or by meditation on them, he was the true servant and interpreter of nature. As was then customary, he used depletion, both by purgatives and bleeding, to an extent

which would now be considered reprehensible, even in the worst cases of inflammatory disease; but, as in the majority of instances he saved the lives of his patients, it is not improbable that diseases of this character were then more severe in their type, as they were assuredly more common, than with ourselves, who for the past fifty years have been practically testing the value of a temperate regimen. He was often called in to extreme cases, and had to travel great distances. Friends who watched by what were considered hopeless dying beds summoned the great physician, and tremblingly feared lest he could not come or would not come so far; and pleasant traditions yet linger in old families, of how the life of such and such a relative was wonderfully preserved by the famous Lichfield doctor, and this by means often the most simple. With a practice of this kind, he in reality passed the larger part of his days and nights in the chaise which conveyed him from place to place;[1] and this may in a measure account for his giving expression to some of the philosophical theories which filled his mind through verse —which, more easily jotted down, was as easily left as resumed—instead of in more elaborate prose, which required a concentration of thought incompatible with constant movement and professional interruptions. Yet, thus incessantly occupied, leading the hardest of professional lives, exposed to all weathers and seasons, and penetrating wild and remote districts then all but inaccessible for want of roads, Dr. Darwin found time for many philosophical and mechanical experiments, as also for a large correspondence and a most generous hospitality. His house in Lichfield was the intellectual centre of the midland dis-

[1] In allusion to this perpetual travelling, a gentleman once humorously directed a letter, 'Dr. Darwin, upon the road.'—Seward's Life of Darwin, p. 152.

tricts. It was in many senses a hospital as well; for here the needy and suffering poor found not only advice, but often, when necessary, extraneous aid; and patients of a higher degree were received as friends, whilst new medicines and regimen were tried or convalescence was insured.

There can be no doubt that, almost from its commencement, the friendship of Mr. Wedgwood and Dr. Darwin partook of a strongly intellectual character. It was not mere visiting and feasting, but a mental attrition of great value to their respective characters; for though different they were yet alike. Both were men of great native genius, both had a taste for philosophical speculation and mechanical invention, and both were generous men. The Doctor had stronger passions, some acerbity of temper, and a satirical vein that often wounded the truest of his friends; but Mr. Wedgwood appears to have received these little rubs and tokens of asperity as a giant would a blow from a child's hand. He laughed and thought no more about them; though others were not so philosophic. On more than one occasion Dr. Darwin had the felicity of saving Mrs. Wedgwood's life, a service which no one could so truly estimate as he who had found in her the most judicious and tender of wives. On the other hand, Mr. Wedgwood had no profounder admirer of his beautiful art than Erasmus Darwin. This is not only testified by direct eulogium, but by indirect evidence. In the pages of the 'Botanic Garden' are many descriptions which are clearly drawn not so much from classical sources as from Mr. Wedgwood's interpretation in cameo of the antique gems—as in the passages descriptive of Cupid snatching the lightning from Jupiter, Venus rising from the sea supported by Tritons, the Nereid on the Sea-horse, and the marriage of Cupid and Psyche. Of course the gems

themselves were, if in the cabinets of our nobility, accessible to a man of Dr. Darwin's fame and position; but his life was, as we have shown, one of incessant professional occupation, and it is thus more likely that his descriptions were drawn from his friend's exquisite interpretation of the originals.

Darwin, like Wedgwood, owed as much to industry as to genius. He had sprung from a lettered and intellectual race, as his father, 'Robert Darwyn, Esq., of Elston, near Newark,'[1] was one amongst the early members of the celebrated Spalding Club; and he supplemented these advantages of genius and birth by a laborious culture which ended only with his life. He acquired considerable reputation both at Edinburgh and Cambridge[2] for his medical and classical attainments; but even after his settlement at Lichfield, we find him still in the pursuit of that anatomical knowledge on which, in connection with pathology, the art of the physician substantially rests.[3] Still untiring, he took up mechanical and philosophical subjects; and it will be just now our delight to show the great doctor as interested in constructing a new kind of windmill, or a new lamp for his friend Wedgwood, as in setting down his protest against slavery, or in hailing the rising liberties of mankind.

Up to the spring of 1765, the business relating to the

[1] See History of the Spalding Club; as also Nichols's Literary Anecdotes, vol. vi. part i. p. 81.

[2] He took his degree of Bachelor in Medicine in 1755. His Latin thesis on this occasion betokened rare ability. It defended the opinion that the action of the heart and arteries is produced by the immediate stimulus of the blood.

[3] 'October 23, 1762. The body of the malefactor who is ordered to be executed at Lichfield on Monday, the 25th inst., will afterwards be conveyed to the house of Dr. Darwin, who will begin a course of anatomical lectures at four o'clock on Tuesday evening, and continue them every day as long as the body can be preserved, and shall be glad to be favoured with the company of any who profess medicine or surgery, or whom the love of science may induce.' Aris's Birmingham Gazette, October 25, 1762.

Trent and Mersey Canal had, as we have seen, consisted more in opposing rival schemes promoted chiefly by the proprietors of the old navigations than in furthering the cause itself. It was, in fact, necessary to abridge the substantive power of the enemy before the fight began. Indeed, the plan founded on Brindley's surveys had had more than one resuscitation; as the public were slow to be convinced, or to risk their capital upon a scheme confessedly beset with many difficulties, and of which the surveys on the northern side of Harecastle were as yet most imperfect. Even its termination, so far as the connection with Liverpool was concerned, was still undetermined.[1] In the plan first annexed to Bentley's pamphlet in the edition of 1765, three termini were proposed—that of the Weaver at Northwich, the Duke of Bridgewater's canal at Agden, and the Mersey at Frodsham Bridge. The earliest surveys all pointed to the termination of the canal in the Weaver at Northwich; and it was the ultimate suggestion of other termini, arising from the exacting spirit of the proprietors of the river navigations, which raised not only their opposition, but their intense rivalry. Whilst there was any prospect of the canal terminating in the Weaver, they seem to have offered little if any opposition, but contented themselves with turning a deaf ear to all proposals for an abatement of tonnage, should the traffic pass by their river to the tideway of the Mersey. Whilst this preliminary strife went on, Mr. Wedgwood and his friends were at work. A new edition of the pamphlet was projected, and the

[1] 'The present design intends to join the river Trent, near Wilden, in Derbyshire, with the river Weaver, in Cheshire, or the Duke of Bridgewater's navigation, or the tide-way in the river Mersey, as shall be found most expedient, by a canal, with branches to Birmingham, Lichfield, Tamworth, and Newcastle.'—A View of the Advantages of Inland Navigation (edit. 1765), p. 12.

suffrages of those most likely to promote the scheme were personally solicited. It is on this occasion that we have our first glimpse of Dr. Darwin; although it is quite evident that prior to this he had been quietly assisting his friends. Any public countenance on his part was at this stage wholly impossible, for he must have had patients and connections necessarily hostile to the scheme, as in the case of Earl Ferrers, the Earl of Uxbridge, Swinfen Jervis, and others, who more or less had an interest in the Trent navigation.[1] In addition to this assistance *sub rosâ*, Dr. Darwin made suggestions and supplied information to Mr. Bentley for the remodelling of the pamphlet; and the form of dedication, about which there was great difficulty and controversy, seems ultimately to have been settled by him.

In thus setting on foot the great work, anew and finally, Mr. Wedgwood wrote to his brother John on the 11th of March:—'On Friday last I dined with Mr. Brindley, the Duke of Bridgewater's engineer, after which we had a meeting at the Leopard[2] on the subject of a Navigation from Hull or Wilden Ferry to Burslem agreeable to a plan before taken. Our Gent[n] seem very warm in setting this matter on foot again, & I could scarcely withstand the pressing solicitations I had from all present to undertake a journey or two for that purpose. We are to have another meeting at Hanley to-morrow, & by Wednesday's post you shall have the result.'

It is on one of the journeys, thus generously undertaken, that Dr. Darwin's name first appears. He was

[1] Journals of the House of Commons, vol. xxx. pp. 737, 739–40.

[2] This is still the chief inn in Burslem. The frontage may have been modernised, but the interior has a look of age, and is probably in the same state as when its rooms were thus used by Brindley, Wedgwood, and other promoters of the great scheme.

from home, and Mr. Wedgwood, proceeding onwards to Birmingham, had an interview with his friend Mr. Garbett, and from him learnt that the plan of the intended canal had been shown to the King by Lord Denbigh, and was also a subject of general conversation amongst the nobility.[1] With his old friend Mr. Taylor, Mr. Wedgwood was not successful. 'Mr. Taylor is just enter'd into partnership with one Mr. Loyd into the Banking business & Mr. Loyd it seems is one of the Proprietors in the Burton Navigation which will be injured by our intended Canal, as it is intended to carry it beyond Burton in order to keep clear of their Locks and Shallows. . . .'

'We made it appear,' he continues, 'pretty evident to the Gent^{n} of Birmingham that £10,000 ℔ ann^{m} would be immediately sav'd to them in the article of Land carr^{e} to & from the River Trent, so soon as the Canal was brought to their Town, which wo^{d} it is apprehended be in less than three years after it was begun upon. We were informed by a very intelligent gent^{n} (Mr. Garbitt of Birm^{m}) that this Navigation would be of great advantage to the Russia merchants, as they wo^{d} be able to send their Iron & Flax with much greater certainty & at 15/ ℔ Ton less expence to Birm^{m} Wolverhampton Walsal &c. & between 30/ & 40/ ℔ Ton less into these parts. We have not yet been with the Gent^{n} of Liverpool but have had instructions ℔ last post from Mr. Bentley in w^{t} manner to

[1] Mr. Garbett was a man of considerable mark. He was a good chemist, and had succeeded in 1745, in conjunction with the celebrated Dr. Roebuck, in establishing a laboratory on a large scale for the economical manufacture of the various chemicals used in the Birmingham trades. The partners set on foot works of a similar kind in Scotland, whither for a time Mr. Garbett removed. But upon the failure of Dr. Roebuck he returned to Birmingham; and at the period under consideration he was carrying on, in conjunction with his sons, a large chemical manufactory.

make our address most acceptable there. This scheme of a Navigation is undoubtedly the best thing that could possibly be plan'd for this country & I hope there is a great degree of probability of its being carried into execution. — I met our friend Mr. Bentley at Trentham & spent the evening with him till 3 o'clock morn^g, and I need not tell you was greatly entertained with his acc^t of men and things in London.'

The application to the borough of Liverpool, as advised by Mr. Bentley, was made by a letter from Mr. Wedgwood to John Tarleton, Esq., one of its members; but no answer was vouchsafed. With the aristocracy of his own neighbourhood Mr. Wedgwood was more fortunate. 'I had the honour,' he writes to Bentley on April 24, 'of waiting upon L^d Gower with a plan &c., & a petition from the Pottery praying his L^dsh^p to take the intended Navigation under his protection & patronage. The Mayor of Newcastle waited upon his L^dsh^p at the same time with a petition from that Body Corporate to the same purpose. We were all very graciously rec^d & his L^dsh^p told us he was very sensible of the utilyty of our design & assur'd us no endeavours of his sho^d be wanting to promote the execution of it.—— If any difficultys sh^d arise which he thought we were unacquaint'd with he would inform us of them—not by way of objection to the scheme but only in order (to) obviate those difficultys, & he recommended it to us to get forward with the necessary business in the Country as far as the nature of it would admit, and so far as the mind of a *great Man* can be known by his countenance and professions he must certainly be in earnest.' Mr. Wedgwood then proceeds:—'Inclos'd is a paper containing a few facts which I think of importance to your Town.

I picked them up in an evening's conversation with a Capital salt manufacturer of Northwich. I sho[d] be glad to have them further authenticated, what relates to the salt trade I mean, but they are of too local & delicate a nature, some of them, to be made Public at present.'

Mr. Wedgwood, with his usual sound judgment, foresaw that the chief contest in the ensuing Parliamentary struggle would be with the proprietors of the old River Navigations, who had expended considerable sums in making navigable their respective streams, but who had too long profited by an exorbitant monopoly to easily relinquish their gains. 'I don't know who are the proprietors of the Sankey coals,' he says, 'but whoever they are they will not lose such a market as Northwich without a struggle to retain it.'

That Dr. Darwin was at this period efficiently, if silently, helping the cause his friend had so much at heart, Mr. Wedgwood himself shows:—'We were very happy in meeting with two such Ingenious and Zealous friends to our cause as —— (I am under a Religious injunction not to name him) of Lichfield and Mr. Garbitt of Birm[m].' The latter, before the final struggle came, deserted the cause in favour of a canal of a more local character; but at this period his services were unremitting. Through his instrumentality Lord Huntingdon, Lord Strange, Mr. Charles Townshend, Lord Shelburne, and Mr. Mackenzie, brother to Lord Bute,[1]

[1] It was through Mr. Garbett's introduction that Brindley was soon afterwards engaged upon one of his most important surveys. 'Lord Bute's Brother (Mr. Mackenzie) profes'd many good (wishes) and beg'd Sketches which were left him. He talks of my applying from him to Mr. Brindley to review Mr. Smeaton's Plan and Estimate of the intended Canal in Scotland.' — Mr. Garbett to Wedgwood, April 18, 1765.

were won over; and through the courtesy of Lord Huntingdon, the plans were laid before the King. From the beginning, George III. seems to have highly favoured this particular scheme of Canal Navigation; and one cause may have been, that it came recommended to him, not only by the great chiefs of opposition, as Lord Gower, Lord Shelburne, and the Duke of Bedford, but by such Tories as Lord Strange and Mr. Mackenzie. Even putting aside all party feeling in the matter, there was no man in his dominions better capable than the King of appreciating the immense value of thus joining, by water communication, the eastern and western seas, or the industrial capabilities of the region it would pass through; and it is probably owing to the interest he took in it as a public question, and his continued expressions of good will, that the Bill passed the House of Lords without a single dissenting voice. Mr. Garbett even seems at this early juncture to have sought the countenance of Lord Bute, though probably without success; but he was wise enough to see that Mr. Wedgwood had already secured the interest of men far more powerful and capable than the defunct minister. 'It gives me great pleasure,' he writes to Mr. Wedgwood, 'to see the favourable account you send me of the application made by you, your Neighbours, and Mr. Mayor, to Lord Gower, whose *Countenance* is of extreme consequence. I think more depends upon that single point than upon any other, and if He engages the Duke of Bridgewater, I don't see any alarming opposition; for all Arguments from common Landowners are no more than General Arguments against all inland Navigation, and will be laugh'd at unless supported by a few such as Lord Gower and the Duke of Bridgewater, who

have great ministerial weight; & if the King should patronise us, as I hope, there will not be many Great Men warmly against us, whose interest is not injured by it.'[1]

The scheme was now brought prominently before the public by weekly articles in the London and provincial newspapers, some of which were of a humorous or satirical character, in order, as Mr. Wedgwood expresses it, 'to set the good folks a-gaping a little & to prepare them,' as he tells his friend Bentley, 'for something better when you and other friends of their Country have their pens at leisure.——You must not my good Friend think of excusing yourself on any acc[t] from helping forward this good work. Your Country calls & I know you will not let her call in vain for your assistance—The Gent[n] in our neighbourhood interest themselves every day more & more in the success of this scheme & are to have a pretty general meeting at N: Castle when Mr. Brindley can come over, for which purpose I am writing to him by this post, and we earnestly wish to know by that time, if it might be, how your Town stands affected.'[2]

Mr. Wedgwood's interviews with the Duke of Bridgewater and other of the local aristocracy, as Lord Stamford, Lord Grey, Sir Walter Bagot, Sir William Wolsley, Mr. Anson, and others, were frequent; and scarcely a week elapsed, when Earl Gower was at Trentham, without his dining or supping with his Lordship, after the transaction of such business as was in hand. Occasionally the enemy had to be encountered. After one journey in July, he writes: 'The next day we waited upon the Cheshire

[1] Mr. Garbett to Wedgwood, April 18, 1765.

[2] Wedgwood to Bentley, April 27, 1765.

Gen^n^ at a Meeting of the Commissioners of the Weaver Navigation at Northwich—who promised likewise to use their interest, provided we fell into their Navigation. But no more of this till we are better acquainted with the subject.'

Whilst the preliminary business thus proceeded, Mr. Bentley was busy with his valuable pen in not only supplying brief articles and notices to various newspapers, but in remodelling his pamphlet. His worry on this latter point must have been constant and excessive. His friends' critical corrections inundated his table. Dr. Darwin wrote occasionally; Mr. Wedgwood filled up invoices and papers with suggestions; Mr. Garbett assisted; and in the final settlement of the form of dedication, the opinion of Ralph Griffiths, the editor of the 'Monthly Review,' was referred to. Even in these minor matters, the perfect soundness of Mr. Wedgwood's taste and judgment stands out in bold relief. Nature had not only made him a great artist in one direction, but in minor things this power was a part of every effect. Referring to a passage already quoted in its corrected form, Mr. Wedgwood thus criticises:—'To have a Lawn terminated by a Canal &c. Why change a more elegant and equally simple word for a worse? Why a Canal is as straight as *Fleet Ditch*.—A Canal at the bottom of your Meadow? Foh! it can't be borne by the Goddess of modern taste—but "*water*" ay *water*, give me *water* to terminate or divide my Lawn. This seems a real emendation—if you think so pray alter it accordingly, for I have the fear of the Goddess before my eyes.'[1] On a more prosaic point, he says: 'I should like that part about the Pottery pared down a great deal. I am afraid

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, September 26, 1765.

of mentioning too much about our manufacture, lest our Governors should think it worth taxing.'

In order probably to propitiate Mr. Thomas Gilbert, Earl Gower's agent, Mr. Bentley had appended to his corrections some flattering paragraph, of which, recollecting the opposition they had already encountered in that direction, Mr. Wedgwood remarks: 'This is a little flummery cooked up for Mr. Gilbert member of Parliament for N: Castle—but I do not like it—as he hath by his scheme rendered himself obnoxious to many in the House of L^ds^. I think it will be better omitted.'[1] And where Mr. Bentley had too exclusively referred the benefits, enjoyments, and refinements likely to arise from the completion of the canal to gentlemen only, Mr. Wedgwood significantly asks, 'Is nobody to wish for such things but *gentlemen*?' — thus proving that *he* at least viewed this great public question in no narrow or exclusive spirit.

The opponents to the proposed canal set afloat the most absurd stories in order to discredit it. It would dry the springs, drain the rivers, the mills would be stopped for want of water, and, by laying the ports of Hull and Liverpool together, lessen the coasting trade, and consequently the number of sailors. Such fictions had to be answered; and not only this, but faults in the style of the pamphlet were pointed out. 'I cannot help sending you a correction or two which I have just received from a friend,' writes Mr. Wedgwood to Bentley. 'In general he thinks the style too flat and tame—but be it remembered that he is a poetical genius.' And when Dr. Darwin's dedication of the pamphlet to the Queen was for some reason superseded by one addressed to the Legislature from the pen of Bentley, the critical Doctor

[1] Miscellaneous papers.

fell to work once more. 'Dr. Darwin says nobody writes Grace & Rt. Honourable but Taylors & such like folks, so do as seemeth good in your own eyes—nor wo^d the Dr. have anything further than ingenious or so to Mr. Brindley's name—but that matter is left entirely to your discretion, feeling &c. Mr. Gilbert and L^d Gower (I ask his L^dsh^p's pardon) have seen your Dedication this morning, & approve of it, but Dr. Darwin does not like *Legislature* & some other things in it, & thinks *Inhabitants* in the article of pleasures more unexceptionable than *Gent^n* but he hath promis'd me to write you his sentiments himself on these & some other things in the Pamphlet, in a day or two at farthest.'[1] In reference to this promised letter, Mr. Wedgwood adds a few days later: 'I doubt not you have rec^d my letter from Uttoxeter & Derby—& a long, critical, & explanatory letter from our ingenious & poetical friend Doct^r Darwin which I doubt not (if it be such as he generally favours his friends with) hath afforded you entertainment, & shook your diaphragm for you whatever it may have done respecting your Pamphlet on Navigation.'[2]

These varying opinions of his critics necessarily delayed Mr. Bentley's progress. The plan was engraved and ready, and time being of value in the matter, Mr. Wedgwood began to be impatient, not only for the issue of the pamphlet, but on account of the trouble and vexation it had been to his friend. 'I am, my good friend,' he writes, 'very sorry that this Pamphlet turns out so troublesome an affair to you, who I am sure have full employment for every moment of your time. As to our friend of Lichfield's remarks, if you can avail yourself of

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, September 27, 1765.

[2] Wedgwood to Bentley, October 7, 1765.

them in the part not yet print'd I know you will, but the condemnation or postponing of the whole, I can by no means agree to, nor persuade myself there is any necessity for it. Must the uniting of seas & distant countrys depend upon the choice of a phrase or mony-syllable? Away with such hypercriticism! & let the press go on. A Pamphlet we must have, or our design will be defeated so make the best of the present & correct, refine and sublimate in the next edition.'[1]

As already seen, Mr. Wedgwood was at this date in London, and by the end of the month or during the first week in November, some few copies of the new edition of the pamphlet were in print. In this interval, he had had a brief but alarming attack of illness, which greatly prostrated him. His wife and brother were happily near, and rendered him every aid in the transaction of necessary business; but in a few days he was again at work, although far from convalescent. He not only dispersed such copies of the pamphlet as had yet come to hand, in ministerial and parliamentary channels, but his interviews with Mr. John Gilbert, the Duke of Bridgewater's agent, were frequent. 'Mr. Gilbert tells me,' he writes to Bentley, 'the D. of Bridgewater wants to know how we proceed in our design as he hath not heard anything of it lately. I am glad to find he hath not forgot the subject, & hope he will be our steady and constant friend.'[2] Sir William Meredith was also active in the same good cause, and the first day Mr. Wedgwood could leave home, he dined at Chelsea with Sir William. The friends were alone, and all the details necessary to bringing the Bill forward in the next session of Parliament were discussed.

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, October 15, 1765.

[2] Wedgwood to Bentley, November 2, 1765.

Upon his return to Burslem, Mr. Wedgwood had a fresh attack of illness, and Dr. Darwin, with an alacrity worthy of their noble friendship, hastened to his side. 'I am got pretty well,' Mr. Wedgwood writes to Bentley, 'but not perfectly recovered. Dr. Darwin, who stop'd all night with me at Burslem last week, hath prescribed something for me which he says will strengthen the machinery & set it all to rights again. The Dr. acknowledg'd he had wrote you two or three very rude letters & said you had drub'd him genteely in return, which he seem'd to take very cordially & to be very well pleas'd with his treatment.'[1]

The pamphlet was published by Becket and De Hondt, booksellers at the corner of Surrey Street, in the Strand, as also by Johnson and Davenport in Paternoster Row; although it seems to have been printed at first in Liverpool, and afterwards in various places as the demand became larger and larger. It was entered at Stationers' Hall in the name of Josiah Wedgwood, and a few early copies were sold at the price of 1*s.* 6*d.*; but this was soon reduced to 1*s.*, Mr. Wedgwood thinking 'it too little as a mercantile article for eighteen-pence.' At the solicitation of Mr. John Wedgwood, Griffiths reviewed, or rather quoted the larger portion of, the pamphlet in the December number of the 'Monthly Review.' His own comments were of the briefest, but sufficient to hand down to us that his opinions on economical subjects were not at all in advance of those of his time.[2] The pamphlet

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, November 18, 1765.

[2] The only benefit derivable from emigration was, in his opinion, the lessening of the number of productive hands in the mother country. 'Those manufacturers,' he says, 'who employ the fewest hands will afford their commodities at the most reasonable rate;' and he adds elsewhere, 'it is one great excellence of inland navigations that they lessen the number of hands.' The contrary proved to be the fact. The great increase in both trade and population at the close of the third quarter of the eighteenth century was in no small measure due to the facilities afforded to inland traffic by the extension of canals.

was also advertised in all the principal newspapers. In consequence the impression was soon exhausted, and Dr. Darwin and Mr. Garbett were advised to have 'their criticisms printed in time for the second edition.'

Whilst the public were thus learning the advantages likely to be derived from this splendid scheme of inland navigation, and every week saw an important addition to its adherents, the proprietors of the Weaver navigation were making fresh attempts to effect a compromise. They now offered to make a canal from Lawton to Northwich; their next proposal was to cut a canal all the way past their old navigation to below Frodsham Bridge, and to make the whole navigation capable of bringing vessels of 120 tons burden up to Northwich. They likewise proposed swivel bridges instead of those they cut past, and to reduce the rate of tonnage to 6*d.* per ton. But the time for compromise had gone by. The promoters of the intended navigation were now masters of the situation, and were resolved to keep it.

Though hitherto unknown, it is not less certain that to Bentley must be assigned the original idea of carrying the canal *all the way to Liverpool*; a plan which necessarily included an aqueduct across the Mersey. This suggestion does not seem to have occurred to him till after the issue of the first impression of his pamphlet, and till the close of the year, and probably grew out of the many difficulties annexed to each of the proposed termini. But eventually it was seen that both time and money would be saved by joining the Duke's canal at a point far more direct than, as at first proposed, at Agden; and there can be no doubt that an agreement was arrived at by concessions on either side. Had Brindley carried the Grand

Trunk Canal in a direct line to Liverpool by an aqueduct across the Mersey, he would have destroyed in a measure his own work, and robbed the Duke's canal of two-thirds of its anticipated traffic; although, perhaps, even Bentley's idea involved the junction of the two canals prior to their being carried over to the western shore. Of the idea itself Mr. Wedgwood wrote as follows:—'I went to Henbury on Tuesday morning agreeable to what I wrote you in my last, which I hope you rec[d] in due course. Sir William came to the Hall soon after I got there & we spent that evening & most part of next morning together without any other company. I told him I had wrote to you & he wished very much that you might come to Henbury. He approved greatly of the plan you had struck out of a Canal navigation all the way to Liverpool, & was convinc'd at once how much that would be better than any River navigation ever could be made. He will act agreeable to the interests of his Constituents, but will it not be necessary by some methods or other to let him know what they look upon as their truest interests in this affair.' Further, in the same letter, after speaking of meeting the Cheshire gentlemen, and their renewed proposals, Mr. Wedgwood adds:—'After these offers and assurances what reasons could I give why we wo[d] not terminate at Northwich? I had none worth mentioning but what your plan furnish'd me with, & that plan must furnish us with our best plea in the House of Commons—therefore have it in all possible readiness. I wish deputies were sent to the D. of B. to agree & fix upon some plan for bringing that part into the House along with the other this Session.' In another letter we see more distinctly that Bentley's new idea included in its plan the Duke's canal. 'I do observe the improvement you claim the

merit of & I am much pleas'd that you lend so much of your attention to the subject, but I do not understand your whole scheme. Suppose our Canal sh^d be made to join the Duke's at Agden. Do you mean that his Grace's Canal sho^d not proceed as now laid down in the plan to B. but should cross (not [1]) the Mersey perhaps a little above Warrington & be carried on to Liverpool & so not fall into the Mersey at all!—Where do you mean the *Aqueduct* to be? There will be an immense one wanted to cross the Dane, or any part of it, from Congleton to near Northwich, & we cannot bring it near that place in its course to the Duke's Canal, the ground being much too low for that purpose, and from the conflux of the Rivers Mersey & Weaver to near Agden runs a ridge of high ground which will not permit our crossing over that way—I am persuaded the Duke (from what I have heard him say) would much rather come to you all the way by a Canal than down the River, & would like to read a Letter on the subject from any ingenious sensible man. I wish you would write to him & learn what his Grace thinks of it.' [2]

Whilst Mr. Wedgwood thus discussed his friend's plan with an evident leaning towards any proposal which might come from the Duke of Bridgewater as to a junction of the two canals by one common outlet to the tideway of the Mersey, the Duke and his agent, Mr. John Gilbert, were themselves ready to make advances in the same direction. It is not unlikely that Mr. Bentley's scheme of carrying the canal from the Trent direct to Liverpool may have been already hinted to them, although

[1] This 'not' is introduced into the text clearly in mistake, Wedgwood having used young Byerley as his amanuensis in this part of the letter.

[2] Wedgwood to Bentley, December 5, 1765.

they thought it prudent to conceal their knowledge for the present. 'The Duke of Bridgewater lay at Trentham on Wednesday evening,' writes Mr. Wedgwood to his friend, 'on his way to London, & sent for Mr. John Brindley & me to attend him there. We had the honour to sup, breakfast, & spend about eight hours with his Grace. The subject you may be sure was *Inland Navigation* & I had the best opportunity to mention my friend & his improvement that I could wish, & in such a manner as I thought they deserv'd. Mr. John Gilbert (his steward of the works) was present. They looked at each other as though some secret design of their own had been discover'd by another before the time they thought proper to avow it, & therefore were very shy in saying anything about it—On Saturday Mr. John Gilbert was sent to Burslem to us to give us some further hints, instructions, & encouragem^{t} in our design, & amongst other things desir'd your scheme might not be mention'd at present, & with a significant nod told me *great things might be done at a proper time*, but we had enough under our hands at present. You will now have an opportunity of conversing with Mr. Brindley, as I sent a line by him to you, & will make the most of it, I doubt not.' It was on the same occasion that the Duke signified his approval of Mr. Bentley's pamphlet. 'His Grace the D. of Bridgewater told me of some deficiences in our advertisements in the London papers, but I have forgot w^{t} they were & have not seen the advertisement myself. The pamphlet his Grace approves of much & thinks it can receive very little improvement in any respect. It is universally admir'd & will be more so the more it is read. A few phrases may perhaps be alter'd for the better, but they are too trifling to merit a serious thought.

The whole is sterling & you will have the honour you justly merit.'[1]

In the course of a few days, Mr. Wedgwood had ascertained, not only from the Duke, but also from Brindley and Gilbert, the scheme thus in embryo, and it amounted simply to this: 'That his Grace intended to bring you a Canal to Liverpool *some way* & *some time*, neither of which circumstances were determined, & whether the Duke will join any other Navigation, or have the time manner & road of bringing this Canal to you chalked out to him is much doubted by Mess^rs^ G. & B. & I most sincerely wish our great Patron may prove in every respect the Patriot we both would be glad to find in him. He has done great things for his Country & for us, & seems to be intending further good for both, it grieves one to suspect such a Character sho^d^ mean to serve himself only, at the expence of what is most dear to a people by whom he is so much beloved. I hope his views are more liberal, more extended & more worthy a character so greatly respected — but it will be our truest policy, as you advise, that whatever be his *motives* we make his *actions* contribute to the execution of our plan, which is certainly calculated to serve the Public more effectually than any other that hath yet been chalked out.'[2]

Though warranted by appearances, and by the reticence of the Duke, there seems to have been not the least ground for Mr. Wedgwood's passing suspicion that his Grace, from motives of self-interest, was otherwise than true to the cause of the promoters of the intended canal. But the truth was, that the Duke at this time was in

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley; written at Newcastle, and without other date than 'Monday morning, before sunrising,' but clearly, from the context and the letters which follow, prior to December 12.

[2] Wedgwood to Bentley, December 12, 1765.

great financial straits. The works at Hempstones were at a comparative stand-still for want of funds. Those which had now progressed beyond Stretford were with difficulty carried on, and the Duke well understood that if his canal deviated from its proposed line to meet the Grand Trunk, it must be at his own expense. There was, therefore, entire truth in the hints already given by both the Duke and his agent, 'that great things might be done at a proper time.' To insure this, negotiations, as suggested by Bentley, must have been at once opened with the Duke, as, only three months after, the Bill was brought into the House of Commons, and thence referred to the Committee of the Trent and Mersey Canal. This enabled him to make a communication, at his own expense, at Preston Brook with the intended canal, and, thus united, to carry them from that point by one channel to Runcorn Gap.[1]

As the probability of this admirable coalition thus disclosed itself, the virulence of the proprietors of the Weaver navigation increased. Not content with securing the Parliamentary influence of Lord Strange, they seem for a time to have won the ear of Sir William Meredith, by representing that, in countenancing the promoters of the intended canal, he deserted the cause of his constituents. They also secured many of the wavering landowners in their interest; and when at length all hopes of the termination of the canal in the Weaver were at an end, they started on a new plan of a capital canal to take the place of the one proposed, and even went to the expense of surveys. Like the Trent and Mersey Canal, it was to join the eastern and western seas, though by a different route; as, after using the Weaver navigation

[1] Commons' Journals, vol. xxx. p. 452.

from Nantwich to Northwich, it was to pass over Madeley Heath, and so by Stafford to the Trent. In addition to this there was to be a branch to join the Duke's canal at Manchester. The whole scheme was probably a mere subterfuge to bring their opponents to a compromise; and this was Mr. Wedgwood's opinion.

Whilst the proprietors of the Old Navigations were thus active, Mr. Wedgwood and his friends were strengthening their cause in every point, and preparing for their Parliamentary campaign. 'I am adv^d when our battle waxeth hot,' Mr. Wedgwood tells his friend, 'which it soon will do, to keep 4 or 5 running footmen at my elbow, & trust nothing of consequence to the post. To send any important intelligence to the Duke himself unless I know Mr. Gilbert to be in town; and I beg you will write anything you think may be of service to the general cause, & convey it by what Channel, & to whom you think most proper. No necessary expense is to be spared, & we have reason to expect L^d Gower publicly to espouse our cause in a few days. The Duke we know will exert all his talents, & interest all his friends in the support of our design.'

Bentley, it seems, had shared not only in Mr. Wedgwood's suspicions as to the good faith of the Duke of Bridgewater, but even extended them to Earl Gower; and on this point had questioned his friend. 'You want an answer to your doubts,' was the reply, 'first whether we are not all intended to be humbug'd? I cannot answer for another man's intentions, but I believe we are in very little danger. We have fixed upon an expedient to avoid it, & that is to insist as much as decency & propriety will permit us, of L^d Gower's coming down into Staffordshire & *Publicly* at a meeting of the Gentlemen

in this County to be appoint'd for that purpose to put himself at the head of our design & take it under his patronage. This I told Mr. Thomas G. on Tuesday last was the only measure that could give us any (chance of) that importance with the Landowners and Country Gentlemen which was necessary for carrying our great design into Parliament this Sessions, & without it we despair'd of succeeding in any other way than complying with proposals from another quarter where the Gent^n would appear openly in our support. This had the desired effect. My L^d Gower had been wrote to & Mr. G. rec^d a letter from his L^dsh^p the day after we were with him promising his assistance in Parliament &c., but Mr. Gilbert immediately dispatch'd an express to London & told his L^dship that a letter would not do for us. That we desired nothing more than to put our intended Navigation under the protection of his L^dsh^p & the D.—but then we were so circumstanc'd that it was necessary his L^dsh^p sho^d come into the country to receive it—that the Potters were determin'd to accept the best Navigation they could get, if they could not get the best they wished for—I have wrote to the same purpose by last post to his G. of Bridgewater at Mr. G.'s request. Now if L^d G. sho^d publicly espouse our cause & take the lead in it, & afterwards desert us, when the D.'s purposes were served the County wo^d never forgive him & I do not believe any private connection wo^d induce him to do it.' [1]

Whilst these were the more secret motives which led to the celebrated meeting at Wolseley Bridge, December 30, 1765—from which date the accomplishment of this noble scheme was insured—Mr. Wedgwood was sounding Brindley as to the Duke of Bridgewater's intentions, and

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, December 12, 1765.

the feasibility of a junction of the two canals. 'I have seen Mr. Brindley again & told him that our present situation oblig'd me to put a few serious & very important questions to him; that I consider'd his connections with the D. and did not desire him to do anything inconsistent with them, but that a whole Country depended upon his well-known abilities & integrity to prevent their being deceived in such important points from any quarter—The first was if there really was a practicable path for our Canal to join the D.'s without too great an expence to answer to the Public or the Proprietors. He says there really is. The next was, whether when other People's business is, it is meant that we should be permitted to do our own. Answer, we may depend upon it—that it is so meant—Thirdly, whether the D. wo[d] cause an estimate to be made of Crossing the Dane (the great difficulty) & enable any engineer to give security to complete that Aqueduct in a given time & for a certain sum, or whether he chose to do it himself—He could not answer for the D. but wo[d] consider the subject himself.' The speedy and admirable manner in which these difficulties were adjusted, leads to the conclusion that Brindley exerted all his influence with the Duke in promoting the junction of the two canals; and this without the sacrifice of the interests of the one to the other. It was a task of immense difficulty, as there were clashing interests to reconcile, landowners' consents to be got, surveys and plans to be made ready, and this as speedily as could be, if the two designs were to be introduced in the approaching session of Parliament. But all those who had the interests of the scheme at heart were energetic and capable men. Mr. Wedgwood and Mr. Bentley met at Knutsford, and at once settled for a second edition

of the pamphlet and the engraving of another plan, as the surveys had to be laid down anew; and for this latter business they called in to their aid Mr. Oldham of Manchester. At Bentley's solicitation, the Corporation of Liverpool voted the sum of 200*l.* for the purpose of meeting preliminary expenses, and Mr. Wedgwood raised 300*l.* in his own neighbourhood for the like purpose; though the probability existed that not four times that sum would cover the expenses which must necessarily be incurred by new surveys, and in battling with the oppositions which were sure to muster all their force in Parliament.

Meanwhile the potters had subscribed more than 20,000*l.* towards making the canal, and the promoters, as a general body, had wisely given up the thought of encumbering their petition with any branches at all; but contented themselves with crossing the Trent twice in their new plan, in order to facilitate a junction with Birmingham, Lichfield, and other places. This added to their adherents and strengthened their hands. Derbyshire stood well affected to the scheme; and in Cheshire subscribers and friends were very numerous; particularly in the Salt district, where the Old Navigation monopolies had long been a great and crying evil. Mr. Garbett of Birmingham at this point withdrew his assistance and patronage on some trivial pretence;[1] but, on the other hand, Mr. Wedgwood won over Mr. Egerton, of Tatton, to the cause; and in a visit he made to Keel, where he met Sir Walter Bagot, his admirable statements and description of the rival plans convinced that gentleman

[1] At this twelfth hour he found objections to the ordinary plan of canal government. He therefore remained neuter. Brindley's opinion was that there were other and more powerful motives for this neutrality.

and his son, Mr. William Bagot, member for the county, of the erroneous views they had hitherto entertained; and from that date these gentlemen, who had strongly opposed the Trent and Mersey scheme, were amongst its best friends.[1] Such were Mr. Wedgwood's incessant and multifarious labours as the year 1765 drew towards its close; and he might well desire as he did in the post-script of a letter to Bentley: 'Adieu. I wish this bustle was over & I was quietly settled a Potter *only* again!'[2]

The meeting at Wolseley Bridge, the most important that had yet taken place, proved eminently successful. Lord Gower occupied the chair, and Lord Gray and Mr. Bagot (members for the county), Mr. Ashton Curzon (member for Clithero), Mr. Anson (member for Lichfield), Mr. Thomas Gilbert (member for Newcastle-under-Lyme), Mr. Wedgwood, Mr. Bentley, Mr. Colquit, Mr. Brindley, and many others of local weight and influence, were present. The potters mustered in great force, and Lord Gower's speech, which is said to have been excellent, was received with enthusiasm. Mr. Wedgwood also spoke with much effect; and Brindley, who was called upon to state his plans, which he probably did in connection with Bentley's scheme, brought them forward with such extraordinary lucidity of detail as to make them clear to the dullest intellect present. After some discussion, principally in relation to the government of the canal by commissioners or proprietors, and its junction with that of the Duke of Bridgewater at a reasonable point above the tideway of the Mersey, it was resolved to apply for a bill conferring the necessary powers in the approach-

[1] At this interview, Mr. William Bagot, whose travels on the Continent had been extensive, gave Mr. Wedgwood a charming description of the Languedoc Canal.

[2] December 16, 1765.

ing session of Parliament; and Mr. Sparrow, of Newcastle, was ordered to undertake the preliminary business.

The meeting separated, but the enthusiasm broke out afresh when the potters returned to Burslem. So well had Mr. Wedgwood prepared the way by the ceaseless and self-denying labour of years, that each of them was now fully conscious of the prodigious benefits that must accrue to his trade by the accomplishment of the proposed canal. The workpeople gathered together and lighted a huge bonfire in the market-place, and round it the masters drank the health of Lord Gower, Mr. Anson, Mr. Gilbert, and Mr. Wedgwood, with loud acclamations of joy. It was a proud day for Mr. Wedgwood, although that of triumph was hardly come. Subscriptions were opened in various places, and Mr. Bentley in Liverpool, Mr. Boulton in Birmingham, and Mr. Samuel Crompton in Derby, were amongst the receivers.

It must not for a moment be supposed that Mr. Wedgwood could now return undisturbed to the more peaceful labours of his manufactory, or to those intellectual communions with his friends Bentley and Darwin, which he so well loved. The battle was scarcely begun. Early in January new oppositions were in embryo, and fresh anxieties arose respecting the canal to Liverpool.[1] The men of both Manchester and Liverpool were up and doing, and addresses to the Legislature from both places were prepared. The constituents of Lord Strange were especially active in endeavouring to induce his Lordship to support the measure. Through the mediation of Mr. Thomas Gilbert, Earl Gower's agent, and the personal solicitations of Mr. Beard, 'Mr. Shuttleworth & all the Derbyshire Gent^{n} & all the most considerable ones below

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, January 4, 1766.

Wolseley Bridge,' were secured. Mr. Sparrow was instrumental in winning over the landowners from the Dane to Wolseley Bridge; and every precaution was taken to prevent applications for branch canals. 'We must next battle the two river navigations,' writes Mr. Wedgwood to Bentley. 'The Weaver will die hardest. I sho^d think your Fr^d in Liverpool might collect facts—enough relative to this Navigation—which will be the best weapons to battle it with. Mr. Colquit & you must handle these weapons when you get to London—Pray mention the subject to him before he goes—Delays of Merchandize to & from Liverpool. Salt in particular—Mismanagement of Commissioners—spending money in order to enlarge the debt—with a long &c. These last will stand us in excellent stead, when we are push'd to put our Canal under Comm^rs which I think we may expect whilst our bill is in the house.' 'You must not subscribe anything to this undertaking as you cannot then be an evidence, or advocate for it at the Committees—but I wish you wo^d get some friend to do it for you. Consider it will be call'd for only by 10 ℔ ct. ℔ annum, supposing the Canal to be 10 years in completing.'[1]

The question of a subscription in order to meet the heavy expenses likely to attend the passage of the Bill through Parliament was for some weeks a source of great anxiety to Mr. Wedgwood and a few others, as the sum needed was likely to amount to 3,000*l.* or more, and of this sum not more than 850*l.* had as yet been subscribed. Of this the Corporation of Liverpool had voted 200*l.*, and 500*l.* had been gathered in Burslem and its neighbourhood, in addition to 200*l.* readily subscribed on a former occasion for preliminary surveys. This was as

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, January 7, 1766.

much as the potters could be expected to do; yet, in order to infuse a proper spirit amongst those concerned, Mr. Wedgwood offered to add to the five guineas he had already subscribed, fifteen more, provided a few of his neighbours would follow his example; but none came forward except Mr. Lawton of Lawton.[1] Recourse was then had to a general letter to Warrington and the other towns immediately interested in the undertaking. That to Warrington was intrusted to Mr. Thomas Wedgwood of the Overhouse, and a general subscription was opened amongst the Liverpool merchants.[2] This of finance was now the main question. There was little else to fear; as, if they could vigorously battle with the proprietors of the old navigations, and keep, in Mr. Wedgwood's expressive words, from being 'hauled down to Northwich,' their cause was won.

The general petition was despatched from Newcastle on the night of January 12, 1766. Three days after it was presented in the House of Commons, and after being read was referred to a committee. Early in the month, Wedgwood had prepared his friend Bentley for a long sojourn in town. 'Pray put your business into such a Channel, as it will move along with the assistance of your good partner for a few months, for I am afraid in that time you will not be able to follow it much yourself.'[3] An opinion which proved literally true, for from January 13 until May 4, the correspondence between

[1] Letter to Mr. Tarleton, M.P., January 11, 1766.

[2] There were many difficulties attending this question in Liverpool, as the Corporation affected to take the Lancashire survey into their own hands—a proceeding which led Mr. Wedgwood to inquire of Bentley, 'Pray now seriously what will your Lancashire Canal be without the Derbyshire, Staffordshire, and Cheshire additions? it dwindles so that I scarcely see its *importance* without the assistance of a mental *microscope*.'

[3] Wedgwood to Bentley, January 5, 1766.

the friends ceases, or at least is lost; and we may therefore reasonably conclude that for a portion of that time they were together in London. Mr. Wedgwood probably received his summons at the close of January, but returned more than once to Burslem in the long interval, as his correspondence with Dr. Darwin testifies.

The Parliamentary Committee to which the petition was referred, contained some very able men, who, from local connection and general acquaintance with the subject to be considered, were fully competent to judge fairly between the petitioners and their opponents. From the first, the Parliamentary struggle of the Trent and Mersey Canal was nothing compared with that the Duke of Bridgewater's several Canal Bills had had to encounter. Local opposition was now less virulent. People by this time had had some little practical evidence of the almost limitless benefits likely to arise from improved intercommunication between one inland district and another; and though the old river monopolies were in the hands of rich and powerful men, the tide of local feeling ran strong against them. The petitioners had therefore great advantages. But, unfortunately, no voluminous blue-books were published in that day, and such Parliamentary papers, as were printed in relation to this application for a bill, perished some years since with many others of a like character. There is therefore nothing but the meagre details of the Commons' Journals to draw from.

By the end of February the plan and manner of junction of the two canals had been settled, and on March 12 a petition from the Duke of Bridgewater was presented. It was to the effect, that the Duke 'having made great progress with his canal to the Hempstones,

and understanding that a canal was projected from Wilden Ferry to Runcorn Gap, two thousand five hundred yards below the Hempstones, prayed that they might communicate with each other at Preston Brook, near Preston-on-the-Hill, and be thence carried on to the Mersey. Thus communicating, the said Navigations would be more complete than if that of the Petitioner had terminated near the Hempstones; and in order to facilitate the said conjunction, he agreed to make the necessary cut or canal at his own expense.'[1] The Duke's petition was referred to the Committee of the Trent and Mersey Canal; and a few days later, leave was asked to bring in another bill for a canal from Bewdley on the Severn to the intended Trent and Mersey Canal at Shutborough, thus putting into direct communication the great seaports of Hull, Liverpool, and Bristol.

At this early stage of the proceedings, eleven petitions were presented for and against the Trent and Mersey scheme. But none of those opposing were of a formidable character, with the exception of that emanating from the proprietors of the Trent navigation; but as they supported their allegations by neither counsel nor witnesses, their petition, like the rest, fell to the ground. The Cheshire gentlemen still reserved themselves; and when Mr. Thomas Gilbert, Chairman of the Committee, brought up the Committee's report, which included certain emendations of the Bill, it was ordered to be taken into consideration by the House.

The strife now began, and from the 15th to the 21st of April counsel and witnesses were heard and examined on either side. The 'Cheshire gentlemen' might be powerful in their own locality, but on the floor of the

[1] Commons' Journals, vol. xxx. p. 452.

House of Commons their insignificance as supporters of an obsolete state of things was evident. From all which has been handed down, and from the direct testimony of the letters we have quoted, Mr. Wedgwood's evidence was masterly in the extreme, and had great weight. He gave, in his usual graphic and concise manner, relevant details as to the hindrances, cost, and other evils incident to the old river navigations; he showed what the export trade was, and what it might become under a better system; and fearless, as he thus touched upon the crowning point of victory, of the Lords of Trade and increased imposts, he revealed the flourishing state of the great English staple of which he was a manufacturer, and dwelt upon the indefinite extension of the trade, and the limitless application of new and improved appliances to the art were the producer assisted in the transit of manufactured goods, and in procuring raw materials, by a cheap and speedy method of communication with the outward ports and the inland districts. Mr. Bentley spoke to the same effect, and painted a future for Liverpool—imaginative then, but long ago far more than realised—of fabulous prosperity, were she made a great receiving port of raw materials and manufactured goods, by opening a water-way across the midland districts of the kingdom. Mr. Colquit and Mr. Beard gave powerful evidence, as did many more; and when Brindley came to be examined, the old navigations received their death-blow. Of course the opposing counsel 'pooh-pooh'd' as usual, made small puns upon 'air-castles,' and were ridiculously incorrect in many of their assertions, particularly as to the feasibility of an aqueduct across the swampy land about the Dane; but the great engineer pointed to the triumphs he had already achieved with the Duke's canal, and

asserted that his proposal to carry the Trent and Mersey Canal by a tunnel through the high ground of Harecastle, was one which, however difficult, he could accomplish. An attempt was next made to recommit the Bill, but the motion was negatived, as also the proposal for adjournment.[1] The amendments were then read and agreed to, some fresh clauses added, and, finally, on April 21, 1766, the Bill was read a third time and passed; Lord Strange acquainting the House that his Majesty, being informed of the purport of the Bill, gave his consent thereto, so far as his Majesty's interest was concerned. On May 1 the Bill passed the House of Lords without amendment, and, on the 14th of the same month, received the royal assent.

Long before that date Mr. Wedgwood was at home receiving the congratulations of his neighbours, and freshly immersed in business of every kind. On April 27, one of Dr. Darwin's interesting letters came to hand. It relates to a French nobleman, a 'Count Laragaut,' who 'has been at Birmingham & offer'd ye Secret of making ye finest old China, as cheap as your Pots. He says ye materials are in England. That ye Secret has cost £16,000 y^t^ He will sell it for £2,000——He is a Man of Science, dislikes his own Country, was six months in ye Bastile for speaking against ye Government—loves every thing English.' . . . But, adds Darwin significantly, 'I suspect his Scientific Passion is stronger than perfect Sanity. . . . I congratulate you on y^e^ Success of your Act of Parliament. Adieu.'[2] The correct name of this French count was De Lauraguais. A few

[1] Commons' Journals, vol. xxx. pp. 739–40.

[2] This is the first of a series of letters most kindly lent by C. Darwin, Esq., F.R.S.

months previously [1] he had taken out an English patent for his discovery; and, singular to say, as we shall find, one of the chief ingredients in this porcelain was similar to that Mr. Wedgwood was in search of, for the purpose of fabricating a fine white terra-cotta body.

[1] June 10, 1766. Specifications of Patents relating to Pottery, No. 849.

MEDALLION.—BOHN COLLECTION.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

MR. WEDGWOOD'S INCREASED CONNECTION WITH ARTISTS—ROUBILIAC—HIS BOOK OF DESIGNS—INTERESTING ANECDOTE CONNECTED THEREWITH—SHOW-ROOMS IN CHARLES STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE—MR. WEDGWOOD'S VISITS TO HIS PATRONESS, MISS CHETWYND—HIS TACT IN THE CHARACTER OF A COURTIER—HIS PARTNERSHIP WITH HIS COUSIN THOMAS WEDGWOOD—OFFICIAL APPOINTMENTS BY THE COMMITTEE OF THE GRAND TRUNK CANAL—MR. WEDGWOOD MADE TREASURER—THE BROAD SEAL FOR THE COMPANY—DESIGNS SUPPLIED BY WEDGWOOD—THE MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE VERY ABLE MEN—THE CANAL BEGUN—REJOICINGS THEREAT—THE RIDGE-HOUSE ESTATE—MR. BENTLEY ASSISTS IN PLANNING THE FUTURE ETRURIA—THE 'ALDERMAN'—RALPH GRIFFITHS THE EDITOR'S VISIT TO BURSLEM—PETER SWIFT—DR. PRIESTLEY'S EXPERIMENTS IN ELECTRICITY—GREAT INCREASE IN MR. BENTLEY'S EXPORTS OF EARTHENWARE—MR. WEDGWOOD'S GENEROUS PROPOSALS IN RELATION THERETO—PITT'S MEDALLION—LORD GOWER—BENTLEY'S OPPOSITION TO THE SLAVE TRADE—THE VALUE OF HIS SERVICES TO THE CORPORATION OF LIVERPOOL—THE SUPPLY OF CLAY—FIRST EXPERIMENT WITH SPAR—CAROLINA CLAY—ITS QUALITIES TESTED BY THE POTTERS.

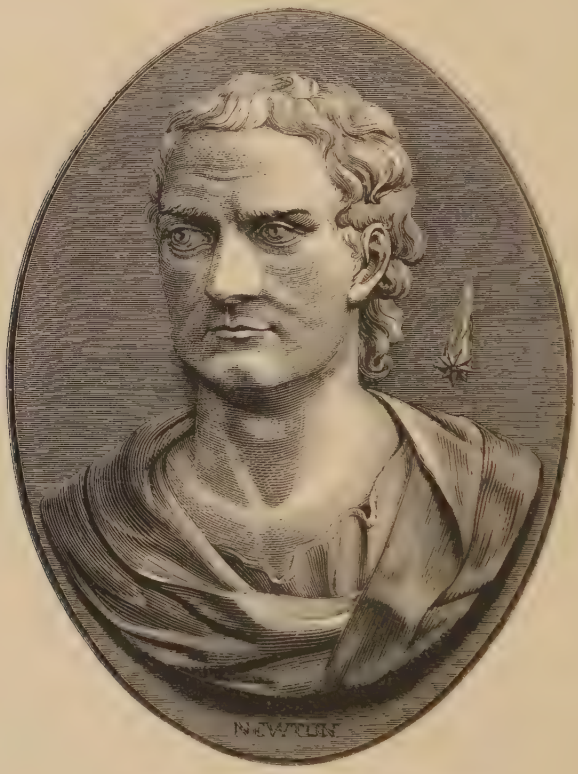
CHAPTER XI.

PUBLIC, SCIENTIFIC, AND ARTISTIC BUSINESS.

ONE of the early effects of the royal patronage which had thus crowned with results the impulse of Wedgwood's genius to unite the principles of utility and beauty, was to bring him more distinctly into connection with living artists and with the works of those recently deceased. During the brief but repeated visits he made to London whilst the Trent and Mersey Navigation Bill was passing through Parliament, he seems, in conjunction with Bentley, to have looked around him in all directions for such accessories as might aid his great purpose. There was need for this: royal and aristocratic orders were rapidly increasing, and if he meant to sustain the fame already acquired, none knew better than Wedgwood that he must work upon, as well as through, the conceptions of other men's minds, in addition to his own. Besides buying books,[1] prints, modern and antique porcelain, and shells, and visiting collections where precious rarities were enshrined, he employed such artists as Bacon and Pingo, an Italian modeller, who afterwards, in 1769, modelled for him the representations of the

[1] We shall see subsequently, from the booksellers' bills, how largely both Wedgwood and Bentley made literature an accessory of their art.

battles of Plassey and Pondicherry.[1] Led also by an admiration of some of the busts, statues, as well as the monumental effigies of Roubiliac in Westminster Abbey, he sought out even the minor works of that sculptor.



(Fig. 88.) MEDALLION OF NEWTON.—DR. HOOKER'S COLLECTION.

In this he was probably assisted by Bentley, for Roubiliac had interpreted in his noble statue of Newton a being endowed with all those lofty characteristics the poet Thomson had immortalised in verse; and Bentley so admired the poet as to read no doubt anew, the eulogy

[1] Mayer MSS.

in the sculptor's art. More than this, it was a fashion to admire Roubiliac. Even the allegories in which he loved to indulge were in keeping with the somewhat fantastic taste of the day; and poets, painters, and critics were alike generous in their praise.

> Hence on Roubiliac's tomb shall Fame sublime
> Wave her triumphant wings and conquer Time.

So wrote Darwin, in allusion to the monument erected to General Wade in Westminster Abbey, but modern taste has neither endorsed this eulogy nor made good the prophecy. Greater sculptors have since arisen, and greater because simpler and severer possibilities in their art have been achieved, though leaving still to gather round the name of the great Frenchman a very appreciable share of that glory and honour which rightly belongs to genius, be its nation or its age what it may.

Roubiliac died early in the year 1762; it is therefore not probable that Mr. Wedgwood knew him personally. Towards the close of the summer of 1767, he seems first to have heard of the sculptor's book of designs, for it is doubtless to this the following passage refers, in a letter to Bentley:—'If you give me directions I may perhaps be in London, to look at the book you mention of designs, as I do not know how soon I may set out for that place.' The information was forwarded, and Mr. Wedgwood, upon reaching London, appears to have called upon Roubiliac's widow, who still resided in St. Martin's Lane. Her husband's effects had been sold soon after his death; but she still preserved a book in which the gifted and enthusiastic Frenchman had jotted down, through a series of years, any momentary thought or vision in connection with his art—a human figure, a limb, a seraphic wing, a flowing garment, a lyre apparently too aërial for the

touch of mortal hands, a serpent, a gorgon, a sphinx, a cup, an urn, a tazza, a plinth, a scroll, or an entablature—in short, all the floating nebula, if we may so use the word, of his prolific brain. All therein varied from antique art: there was more movement, more exuberance, probably more crowding of detail. But Wedgwood, who possessed that highest prerogative of genius—the power to perceive truth under all its aspects and expressions—saw much which he could render serviceable. He admired; and Madame Roubiliac, who seems to have been a woman of superior cultivation and generous impulses, did justice to her husband's memory by presenting Mr. Wedgwood with the book. It has unfortunately shared the fate of Flaxman's, Webber's, and Hackwood's sketches; but there is no doubt that it proved serviceable, and that, for a period at least, some of the articles in cream-ware, as later in black Egyptian and crystalline bodies, were designed or ornamented wholly or partially from Roubiliac's sketches. Perhaps we owe to them some of the variations of the satyr, serpent, or goat's-head vases, or those forms in glaciers and compotiers which were often so beautiful. The acquaintanceship thus pleasantly begun led, on the part of Madame Roubiliac and her family, to an enthusiastic admiration of Mr. Wedgwood's art. At a subsequent period they purchased many choice specimens; and these, still preserved in their integrity by her descendants, give an exquisite idea of the perfection he attained in ornamental ware.[1]

The city was now no place for a manufacturer whose

[1] This interesting account of Roubiliac's sketch-book is derived from his great-grandson, T. Roger Smith, Esq., of Forest Hill, Sydenham. Some charming specimens from his collection of Wedgwood ware will appear in the succeeding volume.

works had come into fashion, and who was patronised by the wealthy and aristocratic classes. Mr. Wedgwood, therefore, hired one or two rooms in the house of a man named Ivison, a shoemaker, in Charles Street, Grosvenor Square. Patterns were shown here, and orders received; the clerk in attendance being Mr. William Cox, already referred to in connection with the early improvements in the lathe. Cox was a widower, and a man apparently past middle life. From the time he had removed from Birmingham to Burslem, he had worked for Mr. Wedgwood; and being capable of corresponding and book-keeping, this post of trust was assigned to him. Mr. John Wedgwood, who yet occupied his old lodgings at the sign of the Artichoke, in Cateaton Street, appears to have exercised a general superintendence over the business, attending in Charles Street occasionally, and, whenever his brother was not in town, acting as his deputy. The appointment he had obtained, whether connected with the Government or some commercial body, was clearly a sinecure which left him a great amount of leisure; for we hear of long visits into Staffordshire, and others to his friend Griffiths at Turnham Green. He was also a lounger in the fashionable resorts of the day, as Vauxhall and Ranelagh, and those taverns and coffee-houses frequented by Whig politicians and literati. He had probably a handsome person and refined manners, for his popularity with the ladies who frequented the pattern-room was apparently very serviceable to his brother's interests, although it did not approach that afterwards attained by Mr. Bentley.

Mr. Wedgwood now rarely made a journey to London without paying his respects to his 'good patroness,' Miss Chetwynd, at the Queen's or Buckingham House, as

Buckingham Palace was at that day called. Occasionally a summons came from royalty itself. The King wanted tiles, or something new in milkpans for the dairy at Frogmore, or the Queen wished to see the latest patterns in cream-ware. How handsomely Mr. Wedgwood dressed himself on these occasions, the bills will just now show. His sword, bought at 'y^e^ sign of y^e^ Flaming Sword in Great Newport Street,' was of the best make, his waistcoat was resplendent with lace, and the barber profited by both his chin and his wig.[1] He must have looked well in this costume, although time and thought may probably have not yet illumined his strongly marked face with all that mingled expression of benevolence, refinement, goodness, and meditation, which sit enshrined on Sir Joshua's noble portrait of this great Englishman.

A most charming anecdote has come down to our day, in relation to one of these visits at court. Mr. Wedgwood was summoned to the Palace, and, on arriving at the appointed hour on a sunny spring or summer's morning, was ushered into the royal presence. The Queen stood with her ladies beneath an unshaded window, and here it was that Mr. Wedgwood advancing made his obeisance, and, displaying the ware he had brought, answered the royal questions. But as her Majesty thus stood examining some exquisite specimen of the art, which years of ceaseless toil and unrepined obscurity had brought to this perfection, the sun's power increased, and its rays, falling on her face, caused her obvious annoyance. The possible etiquette was to have mentioned the matter to one of the unobservant ladies in attendance, who in turn would have summoned a page or royal footman. But Mr. Wedgwood

[1] Mayer MSS.

thought only of removing the intruding glare, and that speedily. He simply walked straight to the window, and pulled down the blind. The Queen, aware in an instant of the relief and its cause, looked up from the object she was regarding, and, inclining her head, smiled her thanks. 'Ladies,' she said, addressing her attendants, 'Mr. Wedgwood is, you see, already an accomplished courtier.' It was courtesy, however, learnt in the school of nature—the offspring of a manly and generous respect for woman—and he would have shown it as much to a peasant as to the Queen, who was his foremost patron.

An accession to Mr. Wedgwood's family marked the early part of the year 1766. His eldest son John was born,[1] and about the same period his cousin, Mr. Thomas Wedgwood, whose agreement as a journeyman had expired in the previous November, was taken into partnership. It was one of those quiet business connections which exist more in work than in name, for that of Mr. Thomas Wedgwood was rarely associated with his great cousin's in any transaction; and after the introduction of Bentley into the firm the splendid administrative abilities of the latter obscured all minor lights. Nevertheless, the association of the cousins was of a most valuable character. Thomas Wedgwood was an excellent potter, and his experience in the porcelain works of Worcester, at a period when great attention was paid to the composition of bodies, and to the finish and general execution of each article, had served well as a preparation for seconding Mr. Wedgwood's labours in the same direction. From the commencement of the partnership till death dissolved it in 1788, Mr. Thomas Wedgwood was at the head of the

[1] John, son of Josiah and Sarah Wedgwood, baptised April 2, 1766. | Register of the Parish of St. John's, Burslem.

useful works both at Burslem and afterwards at Etruria, and within this period the ware of this department reached its highest perfection. There was much that was alike in the character of the cousins, though that of Thomas Wedgwood was far less forcible. But they were both enthusiasts in their calling, and possessed the same eye for form, the same love of perfecting details, and for exquisite finish. Mr. Wedgwood, who regarded his cousin Thomas with the affection of a brother, built him, as we shall see, a house at Etruria, and seconded in every possible way the well-being of this able yet gentle and unambitious man. Thomas Wedgwood married a daughter of one of the Taylors of Burslem; a family, as we have seen, who had long been tenants of Mrs. Egerton, and potters on a considerable scale. By her he had several sons, one of whom had some connection, and a very early one, with the invention of the Electric Telegraph, whilst another obtained considerable local reputation as an engraver.

In May Mr. Wedgwood was again busy with navigation affairs. At a preliminary meeting of the proprietors of the Trent and Mersey Canal, on the 3rd of that month, at which Earl Gower, Lord Anson, Lord Gray, Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Bagot, and others were present, a proposal was made and carried unanimously to appoint him Treasurer. 'I have inclos'd you,' he writes to his brother on the day succeeding, 'an abstract of the business done, by which you will see the honour done me, which was quite unexpected & voluntary without the least previous solicitation on my part, & without one dissenting voice. The reason why I accepted it was, that some of our friends suspected a Candidate[1] wo[d] offer who liv'd at too great a

[1] Mr. Stevenson, of Stafford.

distance from the Centre of the business, & the bulk of the Subscribers, to be convenient, on which I was urg'd to accept it & comply'd. Mr. Smith of Fenton then propos'd me to the Assembly, & I was asked if I wo[d] accept it, & what security I was willing to give. To the former I answer'd in the affirmative & refer'd myself to their pleasure for the latter. The sum fixed upon was £10,000. All this was begun and ended in about (a) quarter of an hour; immediately after it was over Mr. Sam Robison took me aside & very genteely, & offer'd to join in my security, for so much as his bond wo[d] be took for, which unexpected favour I shall ever remember with gratitude whether I accept it or not. I own I sho[d] rather have no other name but Wedgwood in the security, & sho[d] be glad of your advice on this head. The utmost I ever expect to have in my hands at once is 5 or £6000.'[1]

The appointments made on this occasion were confirmed at a General Assembly of the Proprietors of the Navigation, on the 3rd of June, and were as follows :—

COMMITTEE.

Mr. Gilbert	Mr. Chaloner	Mr. Stevenson
Mr. Wheildon	Mr. Leigh	Mr. Sneyd, of Bishton
Mr. John Brindley	Mr. Smith	Mr. Mills [Burslem[2]
Mr. Garbett	Mr. Falconer	Mr. John Wedgwood, of
Mr. Whitworth	Mr. Mare	Mr. Edward Sneyd
Mr. Hoskins	Mr. Palmer	Mr. Willets
Mr. Francis Cob	Mr. Boulton	Mr. Salmon

OFFICERS AND SALARIES.

James Brindley, Surveyor-General	£200 ℔ annum.
Hugh Henshall, Clerk of the Works	£150 ℔ ann. for clerk & self.
J. Sparrow, Clerk to the Proprietors	£100 ℔ ann.

[1] Wedgwood to Mr. John Wedgwood, at the Artichoke, Cateaton Street, London, May 4, 1766.

[2] Of the Big House.

T. Nailor, Clerk to the Cheshire Commrs at a Guinea ℔ diem when employed.

R. Parrott, Clerk to the Staffe Commrs . on the same terms.

T. Bateman, Clerk to the Derbyshire do. do.

(And, adds Mr. Wedgwood facetiously) Jos. Wedgwood, Treasurer, at £000 ℔ ann., out of which he bears his own expences.

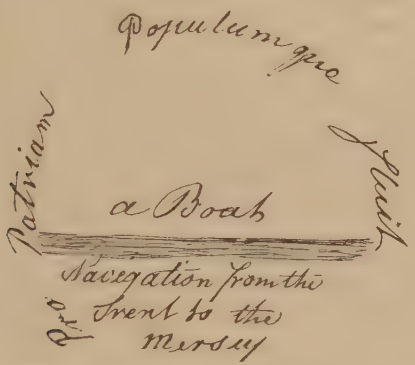
Ordd that the work be begun on immediately both sides of Harecastle and at Wilden Ferry.

That an immediate call be made on the Proprietors for £6 ℔ cent. of their subscriptions.[1]

These official appointments were further confirmed at the first General Meeting of the Committee, held at the Crown Inn, at Stone, on June 10. The design of a broad seal for the Company was then fixed upon. It consisted of a boat in full sail, with an inscription proposed by Lord Gower: 'Pro patriam publicam quæ fluviat.'[2] The errors of this Latinity were soon found out. In a letter sent to Bentley shortly after, Mr. Wedgwood says:—'Every time I have wrote to you since I sent *the motto*, I have fully intended seting you right in that matter, & have as constantly forgot to do it, when I set down to write—I was not in the Room wn the Motto was proposed, nor did I hear of it till the next day—My Author was confident he was right in what he told me, which was what I sent to you, but it seems he was mistaken, & hath thereby led us into errors, & given your critical frds a good deal of needless trouble, but I hope you will take the trouble to undeceive them, as that is a piece of Justice we owe to our Noble Patron. I ask his, yours and your frds pardon for the share I have had in producing these blunders, & shall be doubly oblig'd by your correcting them as soon as possible as it gives me much pain to have been the instrumt of bringing his Lships Literary

[1] Letters and Papers, Miss Wedgwood's Collection. [2] Ibid.

abilitys into question. I am sure you can feel something of my situation, & will relieve me the first opportunity. . . . Below is the Motto,[1] & I believe the seal is intended to be somehow as below, but have not in the least concern'd myself about it, as there are so many abler heads in the Committee. . . . I sho[d] be glad to know if the Motto as it now stands will bear engraving.'



(Fig. 89.) WEDGWOOD'S SKETCH FOR SEAL OF TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL.

And adds Mr. Wedgwood, 'which of these wo[d] you advise.'

One of the orders of this meeting was to the effect 'that all demands upon the Proprietors on account of obtaining the Act &c. should be laid before them at their next Meeting to be held at Sandon on the 2[nd] of July.' Accordingly, we find Mr. Wedgwood making arrangements with Bentley as to the account for pamphlets. 'Suppose,' he suggests, 'we were to take all the expences to ourselves & Charge the Proprietors w[th] what they have had at booksellers' price, how wo[d] that turn

[1] Even this inscription is faulty: it should have been, '*Pro patria populoque fluit.*'

out for us? I only mention this for your consideration, but do what appears best & right to you.' Previously to this, he has been generously pressing upon Bentley's attention the question of remuneration for his eminent services. 'I cannot help wishing,' he wrote on May 26, 'you had sent me the result of the consultation with your good friends at Liverpool before you had left home again. My principal reason for wishing this is, that if the point is not settled at the General Meeting on Tuesday next, it must be left to the Committee, who may not be so sensible of the services you have rendered them as some Gent^n^ are who will attend the General Meeting, nor perhaps inclin'd to reward you for them accordingly. Cannot you favour me with a line in time . . . for as both you & I must be paid for our trouble, by those who cannot possibly know, a fifth, nor perhaps a tenth part of what we have been at, it may perhaps be safest not to leave too much to their Generosity.'[1]

The bills of expenses were not taken into consideration by the Committee till early in July, when they voted Mr. Bentley the sum of 90*l.*, besides a balance that lay in his hands. 'They have ord^d^ me 150 Guineas for my trouble,' wrote Wedgwood to his friend, 'for which I made them a very low bow, & told them I was perfectly satisfyed—I cannot pay any of these matters at present (as Treasurer) but as plain Joss you may comm^d^ it at any time.'[2]

This appointment of Mr. Wedgwood to the Treasurership of the Trent and Mersey Navigation proves as forcibly as direct evidence the universal esteem in which he was held, and the faith reposed in his spotless integrity. That

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, May 26, 1766.

[2] Ibid. July 4, 1766. In the succeeding month Mr. Wedgwood enclosed Bentley a bill on Hoare's bank for 100*l.*

a neighbour should come forward and voluntarily offer to stand bond for a man for as much as that bond will be taken, implies a very high degree of faith, unbounded admiration and regard, both public and private. The time was near at hand when the counting-house at Etruria was regarded as the Bank of the Potteries, where the small tradesman, if he had an honest reputation, could have a bill not yet due readily cashed, or the frugal invest their small savings with a prospect of interest at market value. This universal faith did not gather around Wedgwood because he was a rich man, for at that date many of the master-potters were far more wealthy, but because, from the beginning of his illustrious career, he had practically interpreted the Divine precept to the full.

The majority of the names forming the Committee were those of very able men. Mr. Wheildon, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Mare, Mr. Leigh, Mr. Chaloner, and Mr. Falconer were most skilful potters; indeed, some of them were competitors with Mr. Wedgwood in improving the staple they wrought. Mr. Boulton had already earned considerable reputation both for himself and for Soho, and was about, as we shall soon find, beginning a rivalry with Wedgwood in the manufacture of vases; which was, however, soon brought to a close when Boulton entered into partnership with Watt, and the era of the steam-engine turned his versatile genius into a new, and for him a more worthy, direction. The more practical men on the Committee were Gilbert, John Brindley, Garbett, and some others, who, from experience, were well able to second the plans and suggestions of their great engineer.

The 26th of July, 1766, was an important day for Staffordshire and for the midland counties. In Burslem

it was kept as a general holiday. The 'works' were nearly all closed, and from an early hour of the summer's morning, the population of the surrounding towns and villages poured in. At noon, on a low level beneath the Brownhills, on the old ancestral land of the Burslems and Wedgwoods, and on a portion yet belonging to Thomas Wedgwood of the Overhouse, a dense throng was gathered. Amongst it were to be seen noblemen, gentry, ladies, masters, and their workmen, and all in holiday attire.

(Fig. 90.) SITE ON THE BROWNHILLS OF THE FIRST CUTTING OF THE CANAL.

The centre of the group was composed of those officially connected with the canal. After some excellent speech-making, in which, like veterans, the promoters of the scheme recounted their toils and dangers in the battle won, and like prophets foretold the commercial and individual well-being the undertaking would insure, Mr. Wedgwood, amidst enthusiastic cheers, dug up the first sods and soil, which, when placed in a barrow at hand, were wheeled away by Brindley, amidst reiterated plaudits.

Fresh speech-making followed. A barrel of old Staffordshire ale was broached on the spot; the healths of Earl Gower, Lord Anson, Lord Gray, the county members, the Committee, and other officers were drunk; and Mr. Wedgwood was specially thanked, in the name of the whole assembly, for his indefatigable services in this good cause. Succeeding to this were luncheons and dinners at the Leopard and other inns. The master-

(Fig. 91.) BRICK-HOUSE WORKS, OTHERWISE THE BELL WORKS.

potters entertained their friends at home, and regaled the men in the open spaces about the 'works.' A sheep was roasted whole for the benefit of the poorer potters, and at sunset bonfires were lighted in various parts of the town; a *feu de joie* was fired in front of Mr. Wedgwood's house,[1] and within a very large company assembled to

[1] There can be no doubt that, long previously to this, Mr. Wedgwood had removed to the 'Brick House,' although no direct evidence to this

partake of the bounteous hospitality which Mrs. Wedgwood's skill as a housewife had prepared.

Not a day was lost. On that following the Burslem ovation, the sinking of the shafts on either side Harecastle was begun, and a day or two later a gang of men was at work at Wilden Ferry, below Burton-upon-Trent. Brindley was not a man to pause in even work of an ordinary kind, much less in this, of which the preparation had lasted through so many laborious nights and days. The Committee, one and all, seconded these Herculean labours with the best provisional aid at their command; and hence, as we shall from time to time catch a glimpse, the progress of the canal was very rapid, in spite of the incessant difficulties to be met and overcome. More than this, we shall see that the idea of a bridge at Runcorn across the Mersey, whether originating with Bentley or with Brindley, was still held in view by the more sanguine of the officials.[1]

From the period of his marriage, and more particularly since royal patronage had added so largely to his business, Mr. Wedgwood had been desirous of purchasing an estate

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point exists prior to 1768. It was impossible for him to have entertained guests such as Dr. Darwin, Brindley and his wife, Captain Keir, and others, in a small cottage like the Ivy House; and we may very reasonably conclude that he entered upon the occupation of the 'Brick House' and works at the period of or shortly prior to his marriage.

[1] In one of the undated letters—though, from the references contained, it was undoubtedly written late in May or early in June of this year—Mr. Wedgwood writes to Bentley:—'I wish you could make one of our Committee sometimes, if it was only to hear & edify by some of Mr. W——h's wise speeches, but as I am not one of that respectable body (for such I really esteem them in general) I am present at their debates by indulgence & not by right. I must not make any remarks upon them, but from the good sense, spirit & unanimity of their councils & resolutions, I have the most sanguine hope of this great work being carried into execution with the utmost dispatch & to the general satisfaction of all concerned in it, & so as to be of the greatest possible advantage to the Public. I hope the Runkhorn bridge scheme is not forgot amongst you as that sho^d be the grand finishing point to this scheme in your parts.'

in the immediate vicinity of Burslem, on which he could build a manufactory equal to his increasing trade, where he should have scope for the productive effects he contemplated, and where he could fittingly enter upon a more organised system of details than hitherto had been possible in his works. His friend Mr. Boulton had already introduced at Soho this organisation with the best possible results; and Mr. Wedgwood saw to what account it might be turned in his own establishments. Land had become trebled in value in and about Burslem during the preceding twenty years. Manufacturers and owners were as unwilling to let upon lengthened lease as to sell; and those works which on rare occasions came into the market for sale or hire, were wholly inadequate to his purpose. It was, therefore, after much patient waiting, a source of gratulation to him to hear that an estate lying on the banks of the intended canal, and within two miles both of Burslem and Newcastle, was likely to be sold on the death of its present owner, an aged lady named Ashenhurst. Her son, who was a major in the army, was quartered in Ireland, and it was rumoured he would not care to retain an estate over which, as a constant absentee, he could have no immediate control. To make sure of this fact, Mr. Wedgwood despatched his own and his brother John's confidential friend, Mr. Hodgson, to Ireland, and the result of this visit was most satisfactory. Mr. Wedgwood then opened negotiations with Mrs. Ashenhurst's steward, and after some weary preliminaries and a good deal of subsequent trouble, the purchase was portionally effected, and early possession stipulated upon payment of a life-interest.

The estate was of considerable extent; part of it occupying a high and lengthened ridge overlooking the

valley leading to Newcastle. On this stood a small and very old timbered manor or farm-house. Around lay uncultivated slopes and fields, yet in portion covered with heath, broom, hollies, and gorse. The trees were few and wind-swept by many winters; and near the house was an ancient stone-pit. It was in these fields, then almost unenclosed, that the scattered inhabitants of the neighbourhood hid their waggons, implements of husbandry, corn, and cattle, at the time of the Rebellion of '45; the huge patches of broom and holly forming an admirable covert.[1] As Mr. Wedgwood well knew, this ridge, with its broken undulations, offered great capabilities for decorative effects, both in building, planting, and landscape-gardening; whilst in the valley below stretched out many acres of level surface, on which could be erected works on an extensive scale, and the necessary appendage of official and workmen's dwellings.

A letter or two, in which Mr. Wedgwood described these particulars to his friend Bentley, has perished; but in the postscript of one dated July 18, we hear that the great point is partially effected. 'I have now bo[t] the Estate I mention'd to you, for which I am to pay £3000 at Michaelmas next.' A few weeks later, after one of his frequent business visits to Liverpool, we begin to see the great fact of Wedgwood and Bentley's lives approximating; and that neither the former nor his admirable wife could take enjoyment in their new possessions without the presence and cooperation of their dear and gifted friend. 'My Sally says,' writes Mr. Wedgwood, 'your *fat sides* require a good deal of shakeing, & wo[d]

[1] Shaw's History of Staffordshire Potteries, p. 189. It was then occupied by Ralph Leigh, who was probably the father of Mrs. Ashenhurst.

recommend a journey on *horseback*, not in the Coach, to Burslem, & is half angry with me for coming home without you, but your last letter hath brought her into a little better temper, as she expects not only the pleasure of seeing you here in a little time, but likewise a jant to Liverpool in consequence of your visit; besides she will not fix upon a spot for either house or Gardens, no nor even the Stables 'till you have viewed and given your opinion of the premises, so now my dear Sir you are invited to the Ridgehouse Estate in quality of a Brown,[1] and this may remove my only objection to seeing you here, I mean your takeing so long a journey to so little purpose—Ten Guineas if I remember right is the price of a single call, with or without the advantage of his direction, to make a Lawn & piece of Water here—Cut down that wood & plant it there, level that rising ground, & raise yonder valley &c. &c. But for ten times the business, fifty miles rideing, & a hundred times the genius, why we must expect to be sure to pay accordingly. One thing further permit me to mention, that we shall be affronted with a short visit, but very thankfull for a long one, so pray settle your business accordingly before you mount your Rosinante, & as a salvo or quietus to your Conscience for the loss of so much time, which I know to be very squeamish, & am glad it is so, on these occasions, tell the troublesome sprite, that as our connections are to become extensive in the Potting business, it is absolutely necessary you sho[d] visit the manufacture, see what is going forw[d] there, make your bargains accordingly, and lend your assistance towards its further improvement—Tell him y[r] fr[d]

[1] Alluding to the celebrated landscape gardener of the day.

Wedgwood hath some pretty things laid up for you, which he cannot send without your first seeing them, & I hope he may be prevail'd upon to let you spend a fortn^{t} or so in this neighbourhood.'[1] Bentley accepted this cordial invitation some time between the end of September and the second week in October. Ralph Griffiths, the Paternoster Row bookseller, and editor of the 'Monthly Review,' had just previously been staying with the Wedgwoods at Burslem. But neither the country nor the hospitality of his friends had charms sufficient to induce him to prolong his visit till Mr. Bentley's arrival. 'Our dear friend Griffiths,' writes Mr. Wedgwood satirically and not without evident justice, 'hath left this dirty spot of Earth (as it appeared to his elevated mind) & this morning took his flight to the realms above. . . . The plain matter of fact is, he waited *impatiently enough* so long for your Machine,[2] which not appearing at seven hours after its usual time, he got into a Chaise, determining to be at any expence rather than be kept another day from his beloved Turnham Green. If you wo^{d} wipe the tears from our eyes & gladden the hearts of your afflicted friends, surprise them with the *unexpected visit.* The Alderman[3] & Sally both earnestly wish that such an event may take place & you have my free consent to fall in love, as soon & as often as you please, provided

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, September 15, 1766.

[2] The Liverpool coach.

[3] The 'Alderman' was one of Mr. Wedgwood's brothers, as already mentioned. Whether the term was a reality or a mere *sobriquet,* it is difficult now to say—most likely it was the latter, as he appears to have been corpulent and a lover of good eating. He was unmarried, his circumstances evidently easy, but his health far from good. After Mr. Wedgwood's application to Sir William Meredith on his account, he seems to have obtained some post in Liverpool, and to have divided his time between that place and Burslem; and early in 1766, Mr. Wedgwood offered to build him a house at Etruria. He is always referred to in terms of great affection, though a little banter peeps out now and then.

allways that you pay your devotions in propria Persona.' If his literary productions be taken as a test, Griffiths was a very commonplace sort of man, who had probably no enjoyment apart from bargain-making, or the society he found in taverns and coffee-houses, or gathered round his own ostentatious table. He had clearly no eye for the simple graces of his friend's home; nor could his dull senses comprehend the march which civilisation, commerce, and the arts were taking on the very 'spot of Earth' he found so dirty, dull, and smoky. A very different man was Bentley! The few days he devoted to his friends must have been filled up with a thousand pleasures. There was the canal, engine-turning, antiquities, exports of ware to the colonies, supplies of clay from new sources, and countless schemes for the future to discuss. Mr. Wedgwood displayed the 'pretty things' he had promised, and long autumnal noons were spent amidst the gorsy uplands of the Ridge House in planning the future Etruria. In rough detail, the whole was set out during this visit, though various modifications were subsequently made. 'I believe we must build our house in the stone-pit field at last,' wrote Mr. Wedgwood to his friend on December 8. But as yet we find no mention of a house to be specially erected for Mr. Bentley, though it was so soon to form a feature of the scheme.

It is during this autumn that we catch our first glimpse of Peter Swift, whose name figures so largely in thousands of invoices. Peter was evidently quite a character. Elaborately precise, painstaking, highly conscientious, thinking no man so great as his good master, or any place in the world to be compared with Etruria, his figure stands out in bold relief, though at the distance of a century. Tall, thin, formal, in brown suit, bob-wig, and with

pen behind ear, he seems prototype of the clerk Charles Lamb tells of, who could not sleep of nights because a single figure or a penny had been cast wrong in the year's accounts. Peter is equally troubled, and most impressive in his adjurations as to correct books. He is evidently no genius; his spelling is faulty, his grammar worse, and yet Peter is undoubtedly one of those inestimable servants who by years of devoted service added so much to the efficiency and *morale* of the working staff at Etruria. In some of the foot-notes to the invoices, his *naïveté* is charming. After specifying such an amount of plates and dishes as would serve at the feast of a little German principality, adding thereto the items of vases, compotiers, cream-cups, and garden-pots, or so disguising the classical name of some exquisite cameo as to render recognition a matter of guess-work, Peter informs the 'house' in town that 'Mr. Wedgwood's leg is took off,' 'Master Jacky is better,' or 'the ladies send their compliments to Mr. Bentley.' In all the information he conveys, Peter is concise and solemn, but his affection and veneration for his great master are as apparent as though expressed in a folio page.

Mr. Wedgwood was indebted for this worthy servant to his friend Bentley. 'I am much oblig'd to you for your recommendation of Mr. Swift to me as a Clerk & the trouble you have took to inquire into his Character & *voluntarie* pursuits — I like them both very well & sho^d^ be glad to close with him if my Countinghouse here will answer his expectations — his being married is I think an objection to employing him in London on many acc^ts^—I sho^d^ expect him to engage for three years at least—the next preliminary is the Wages he expects for the Country — London wages to one who must keep house

there must be more than is commonly given in the Country—I cannot expect him to do the business of one who hath been used to a Countingh^n & I suppose he will consider that circumstance in the proposals he sends me which I shall expect in a post or two, as another Gent^n you say is waiting the result of our treaty.'[1] In less than a week after the date of this letter, the future bookkeeper presented himself at Burslem, and Mr. Wedgwood thus wrote to his friend:—'Thank you for your acceptable letter by Mr. Swift. I like him well upon sight, we have agreed upon £25 ℔ ann^m for the two first years & £30 for the third, but if he is dilligent & deserves it, he shall not want encouragem^t.'[2] Early in October, Mr. Swift brought his wife and children to Burslem, and entered upon his life-long service.[3]

On his journeys through Warrington to Liverpool, Mr. Wedgwood occasionally saw Dr. Priestley, who at this time was much occupied with experiments in electricity. In addition, Mr. Bentley kept him well informed of the Doctor's progress; and from information thus conveyed, we learn how early Mr. Wedgwood contributed in various ways to these philosophical researches. We also gather that the application of electricity to manufacturing processes had already occurred to Priestley, and had been tried in several branches of the arts.[4] 'I am much

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[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, September 15, 1766.

[2] Ibid. September 19, 1766.

[3] Ibid. October 9, 1766.

[4] Dr. Priestley was at this time engaged in writing his 'History of Electricity,' which was published in March of the succeeding year. He was also in constant correspondence with Dr. Franklin, who was then in London, Mr. Canton, Dr. Price, and Dr. Watson, on the subject of his experiments, and each section of his work was regularly forwarded to them as soon as transcribed. Electricity was, as he himself tells us, his 'favourite study.' At this period of his life he devoted all the leisure time he could spare from the duties connected with his tutorship to electrical discoveries, of which, writing to his friend Mr. Rotherham in the early part of this year (February 1766), he says: 'I do not know

pleas'd with your disquisition upon the *Capabilitys* of Electricity, & sho[d] be glad to contribute in any way you can point out to me towards rendering Doct[r] Priestley's very ingenious experiments more extensively usefull, & whatever is the result of your further thoughts, & the Doct[rs] experim[ts] on this subject I am ready, so far as I can be concern'd, to satisfy & confirm y[r] resolutions. But what daring mortals you are! To rob the Thunderer of his Bolts, & for what? not to blast the oppressors of the poor & needy, not to execute some public piece of justice in the most tremendous and conspicuous manner, that shall make the great ones of the Earth tremble!—But peace to ye mortals no harm is intended. Heaven's once dreaded bolt is now called down to amuse your wives & daughters—to decorate their tea-boards & baubles! Well! if you think this business may be pursued without presumption, & with safety to ourselves, I sho[d] very gladly meet you at Warrington, if you let me know when you can spare a day for that purpose. I beg my respectfull comp[ts] to the Doct[r] & wish him all possible success in his delightful and ingenious researches into the secrets of nature.' [1] In a subsequent letter we hear further of the same subject, and infer that Bentley had been questioning his friend as to some pottery for

whether you had a taste for these subjects. I am enthusiastically fond of them, particularly since I got a little apparatus of my own, which I had a year or two before I came to Warrington.' It seems probable that Mr. Bentley, in his visits as a trustee to the Academy, witnessed some of the Doctor's experiments, and thus became aware of the potency of electrical force in imparting to non-conducting surfaces a coating derived from metallic substances. This discovery, it is apparent from Mr. Wedgwood's letter, had already been tested by the japanner and jeweller, and it seems likely that Bentley considered the discovery might be useful to his friend in certain branches of the potting business. The subject must have been altogether one of great interest to Wedgwood, both on its own account and the early philosophical connection which had existed between Priestley and the Rev. Mr. Willet.

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, October 9, 1766.

the use of the Doctor's experiments. 'You ask me in a former letter about filtering pots, I believe we cannot make any that would be equal to a bed of sand, but as I never attempted such a thing, I cannot say what may be done. Pray has Dr. Priestley made any more experiments relative to gilding by Electricity? I do not understand what you meant by the Battery he had some thoughts of attempting, was it for a Copper work?'[1]

Mr. Bentley's mercantile transactions were at this time greatly increased, chiefly through the export of earthenware to the American colonies and West India Islands. His calls upon the Burslem warehouse were become considerable, and his business was in fact undergoing a rapid transformation from one of general merchandise into that of earthenware alone. 'I am extremely happy,' writes Mr. Wedgwood, 'in the thoughts of haveing our connections increase in any way & the pleasure will grow in proportion as those connections can be made more agreeable or advantageous to you, & as you are to be a Pot merch^t, you may rest assured that in everything I can make a purchase, you shall be enabled to serve your friends to the utmost of their wishes, so take in orders for anything this country produces & in what way you think fit, but whole Crates will certainly be attended with the least trouble—With respect to commission or proffitt upon the goods you sell I shall very readily conform to any plan you may have determin'd upon, or if you have not settled that matter, I wo^d make a proposal, a very simple one to you respecting this new branch of Trade betwixt us, which is, that whatever goods I purchase to send you, we divide the proffit laid upon them Equally

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, March 2, 1767.

betwixt us, which is to pay you for the trouble of selling & me for that of buying in the goods, & for the goods of my own Manufacture I allow you 10 ℘ C^{t} Comm^{n} as before, & I hope by this plan a trade may be struck out worth our attending to.—If this plan be approv'd of, I must know whether the goods you order at anytime are for wholesale or retail customers, as the prices must be made accordingly—For this reason I sho^{d} know if the Waggon Crate now ord^{d} is for Exportation, a shop, or a private family. If for the former the proffits must be more moderate & a disc^{t} of 5 ℘ C^{t} allow^{d} for ready money, but we never allow any disc^{t} to the latter, as that is properly selling them retail—I shall from time to time, as you send me Commissions buy the goods on the best terms ready money can purchase them for, & charge them in the invoice sent to you with the proffitts laid upon them, & at same time inclose you an Acc^{t} what that is upon each parc^{l}. . . . I sho^{d} be glad to have your thoughts upon this business when convenient.—On Thursday next you may expect another cargoe of Cream-colour & perhaps a little green & Gold for hot Climates, with some pretty things for the Ladys who honour you with their company. . . . I have only one objection to sending you a sortment of vases, which is that they wo^{d} very probably some of them travel back again into Staffordshire. You remember the application to Dr. Turner.'[1]

As the summer advanced, the consignments of white ware to the Liverpool warehouse increased, and cream-colour was in great requisition for the export trade. The

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, June 26, 1766. This is the first indication we have of that system of pirating all Mr. Wedgwood's newest and best productions, from which he suffered so largely, and of which we shall see so much at subsequent dates.

demand for this latter ware was even greater than the supply, so that the ships, on that account, had often to sail without it; and this induced Mr. Wedgwood to make a proposal to his friend to purchase it as it was made at a pot-work in Burslem, where it could be had fifteen per cent. cheaper than elsewhere, and keep a stock of from two to three hundred crates in Liverpool.[1] The Liverpool warehouse was also useful as a receptacle for goods of which the home demand had ceased; or the rapid advance of improvements in body, form, and decoration, individually or combined, had lessened the mercantile value. 'Pray sell the Green and Gold,' writes Mr. Wedgwood to Bentley, on August 1, 'for Pensacola, the new discover'd Islands, or where you can, for I never will take it again, so make your best of it. I am quite clearing my Wareh° of colour'd ware, am heartily sick of the commodity & have been so long, but durst not venture to quit it till I had got something better in hand, which thanks to my fair customers I now have & intend to make the most of it. Green desert ware is often wanted *in reality* for the West India Islands. I have a few crates on hand, some gilt, some plain, *Eryo*, sho^d be glad to part with them on very moderate terms, for the reason assign'd above I wo^d sell them 20 ℔ ct. less than I ever sold any before.'[2]

At this juncture the popularity of the great statesman

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, July 18, 1766.

[2] This paragraph gives some insight into the remarkable rapidity with which Mr. Wedgwood's improvements, especially those of body and decoration, followed each other. During his partnership with Wheildon, green ware first came into general request. At the period of his early patronage by Sir William Meredith, and afterwards when the Queen gave her first order, green ware, with gilt sprigs, was considered a choice and costly article; whereas, in a year from the date of the royal patronage, Mr. Wedgwood, by the mastery of his art, had wholly superseded it, and consigned it to the tables of West Indian and Carolina planters.

Pitt was at its height, both here and in the colonies, from the part he had taken in the repeal of the American Stamp Act. In deference to the popular taste, his likeness, in the form of cheap medals and prints, was hawked about everywhere; and Green and Sadler, of Liverpool, taking advantage of these, issued a printed copy upon small oval plaques of white pottery, which were sold at the price of a penny or twopence. As a matter of course, these were at once reproduced in the Staffordshire Potteries. Mr. Wedgwood, who in everything could strike out a path for himself, and who, like every true Englishman, ardently admired the great patriot, put in force a more artistic idea. He had a model made in London from a good print, in which Pitt's features, in all their strong outline and marked expression, were admirably conveyed. From this model he formed one of his earliest attempts at a medallion likeness. The surface or body, made of ordinary clay, coloured in the mass of a chocolate or brown colour, was oval in form, and about three inches and a half in height, by two and a half inches in the widest part. The medallion which rested on this in low relief was white, and formed probably of the improved white-ware body then general in the Potteries. The whole was highly glazed, and being nothing more than ordinary pottery, the medallions were sold in the markets and all over the country at a cheap rate, perhaps fourpence or sixpence; and at a still lower price as soon as the original was pirated by inferior manufacturers in various coloured bodies. Of this little plaque or medallion we have a brief notice. 'What do you think of sending Mr. Pitt upon Crockery ware to America?' writes Mr. Wedgwood to Bentley. 'A Quantity might certainly be sold there now, & some advantage made of

the American prejudice in favour of that great man. L^d^ Gower bro^t^ his family to see my works the other day & asked me if I had not sent Mr. Pitt over in shoals to America. If you happen to do anything in that way we can divide a tolerable proffit & sell at the same price with Sadler.'[1]

Though one of the foremost men in Liverpool, and greatly regarded by those who from intellectual and educational advantages were enabled to rightly estimate his generous character and admirable powers, Mr. Bentley was not popular with a certain portion of the trading and mercantile community. The truth was, he had, from his first settlement amongst them, opposed their systematic and detestable traffic in slaves, and had taken every opportunity of condemning and exposing it. He was nevertheless in the confidence of the Corporation, and occasionally acted as medium between that body and the Government. Only a few days after the passing of the Trent and Mersey Navigation Bill he was in London on corporate business connected with the Bankrupt Act. 'I am a little sorry,' writes Mr. Wedgwood, 'for your being obliged to take the field again before the scars of the last Campaign are closed up—but take courage my friend, fatigues and hardships are very necessary in forming great Characters & you will by these frequent attendings in Parliament be the better prepar'd for filling a seat in that August assembly yourself, when the time comes, & who knows how near that may be?—but let this happen when it will, I perceive very plainly by the good sense your

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, July 18, 1766. Twelve days after this date Pitt became Earl of Chatham. One would like to know if this fact acted adversely on the American venture. A few years ago, this medallion of the great statesman was very common in the farmhouses and cottages of the midland counties.

Corporation hath now shown, that when anything of moment to the port of Liverpool is to be transacted in Parliam^t^ you must be their Agent with the Senate, & as you desire my advice & as I think myself very capable (for who does not) of giveing it, take what I have to give in two words. Do not give up your opinion too easily to Men who know not the matter so well as yourself. Do not let your modesty prevent your making a proper use of your abilitys. If I may add a third—take care of your health, and so God bless and prosper you, and all your laudable undertakings.'[1]

Mr. Bentley was in many ways of great assistance to his friend. Some portion of the business connected with the consignments of clay from Dorsetshire, Devonshire, and Cornwall, began at this date to pass through his hands, and Mr. Wedgwood's interest also secured to him the privileges connected with the purchase of timber for the Trent and Mersey Navigation, for which he received a due percentage. He likewise procured cloth, sea-biscuits, and other goods for Mrs. Byerley's shop in Newcastle,[2] and raisins,[3] sugar, and occasionally a counterpane for Mrs. Wedgwood.

The quantity of native clays then imported into Liverpool was inconsiderable in proportion to the constantly increasing demand. This arose, not because the clays themselves were scarce, but from the yet existing difficulties of transit by sea and land. A manufacturer had, if he did not employ an agent, often to wait weeks for a shipload, and occasionally had to travel to a southern port itself before he could even secure a small consignment. To Mr. Wedgwood the difficulty was less, as he

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, May 26, 1766.

[2] Ibid. September 25, 1766.

[3] Ibid. April 19, 1767.

was a capitalist, his wants were on a large scale, and he could enter into arrangements for a definite supply with the clay merchant. Still the large consumer at times had his difficulties; and this, in connection with the spirit of competition abroad amongst manufacturers, combined in some degree with the desire to outvie each other in new productions consequent upon the use of new materials, if such existed in nature, led naturally to much experiment, as also to the desire of securing fresh products, which might enlarge the range of manufacturing probabilities, and secure them against a stinted supply of raw materials. On the other hand, the merchants and captains they employed were cognisant of these facts. It therefore became the custom on the return voyage, as freights were generally light, to risk samples of clay and other earthy bodies from the foreign ports they touched at; especially from the southern ports of North America, as the two Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida, which abounded with alluvial deposits.

Bentley, whose great intelligence kept him perfectly *au courant* with the physical and material discoveries of the age, and who, from the nature of his business, was brought necessarily much in contact with the captains of merchant vessels, became by this means the medium through which many samples of this character reached Mr. Wedgwood's hands. We therefore find him at this date supplying his friend with various sorts of spar, and with clay imported from Pensacola, a small newly settled port in the Gulf of Mexico, then considered as belonging to South Carolina, but since assigned to Florida. He had, as we have seen, trading relations with this port; and as various manufacturers were looking eagerly towards these southern regions, in prospective hopes of a limitless supply

of a raw material of which they stood in need, he did not lose sight of Mr. Wedgwood's interest in the matter, as he was aware that his friend's analytical researches extended themselves in a varied direction. Mr. Wedgwood also occasionally undertook experiments for those who sought to make an import of these clays a source of profit. As early as June, 1766, and at the very date of the first meeting of the Committee of the Trent and Mersey Navigation at Stone, we find Mr. Wedgwood referring, in his correspondence with Bentley, to both native spars and imported clay :—'I shall be glad to receive the sparrs you mention, & will make some trials of them, the first leisure time I have. . . . I sho^d^ write to Mr. Vigor by this post, but do not know that he is at Manchester, or how to direct to him in London, for I must have the 5 or 6 C^t^ of the material before I dare engage with his friend to make it worth his return into America.' 'I cannot possibly have the pleasure of meeting you at Manchester this week,' he writes again to Bentley, 'nor wo^d^ I write to Mr. Vigor till I am certain of his being at home to receive the L^r^ himself—Please to give my compliments to him and desire he will send the few pounds of Earth he has by him that I may give it a fair tryal. I will then shew him the result & we must then treat with his friend accordingly. I sincerely wish it may turn out agreeable to our wishes & beg leave to assure Mr. Vigor that no endeavours shall be wanting on my part to make it so to each of us, but I find that others have been dabbling with it before us, for a Bro^r^ of the Crockery branch call'd upon me on Saturday last, & amongst other Clays he had been trying experiments upon shew'd me a lump of the very same earth w^ch^ surpris'd me a good deal & I sho^d^ allmost have thought myself robb'd of it if it had not

been much larger than my pattern. He told me it came from South Carolina, that he had a large boxfull of it, sent to him by a Gent[n] of his acquaintance, but he could make nothing at all of it, & had return'd the remainder to his friend again. I was not sorry to hear the latter part of his story, which I could the more easily credit, as I find by the tryals I have made it will require some peculiar management to avoid the difficulties attending the use of it.'[1] Again he writes on the same subject: 'The importation of American clays must depend upon the quality & price; the first cannot be ascertain'd without experiments which I wo[d] gladly make when furnished with materials, the latter the Captain I suppose can inform you something of.' The spar supplied turned out a failure. 'Calcarious sparr will not be of any use. I have already tryed that sort, having some of it by me.'[2]

This shows us that Mr. Wedgwood was already upon the experimental track of one of his greatest and most original discoveries.

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[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, undated, but from the contents belonging to some part of the year 1766.

[2] Wedgwood to Bentley, September 15, 1766.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

POPULAR CREDULITY—EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH IN CONNECTION WITH MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY—MR. WEDGWOOD'S HUMOROUS PROPOSALS—BECKET THE BOOKSELLER'S DINNER-SERVICE—MR. WEDGWOOD'S CHARMING REMARKS ON THE DINNER-PLATE—THE CEASELESSNESS OF HIS SELF-CULTURE—HIS PURCHASE OF A COPY OF COUNT DE CAYLUS' GREAT WORK UPON 'ANTIQUITIES'—ASSISTANCE DERIVED THEREFROM—PARTIAL REPRODUCTIONS FROM THIS SOURCE MORE ABUNDANT THAN DIRECT ONES—ANTIQUE GEMS, LAMPS, AND BORDERINGS—PROPOSALS OF PARTNERSHIP—BENTLEY'S DOUBTS—MR. WEDGWOOD'S FINE REPLY—THE GREAT VALUE OF THIS LETTER FROM AN ARTISTIC POINT OF VIEW—THE WONDERFUL FERTILITY OF WEDGWOOD'S CREATIVE FACULTY—DIFFICULTIES OF THE TREATY WITH MRS. ASHENHURST—A GREAT SORROW IN THE SUDDEN AND MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF MR. WEDGWOOD'S BROTHER—AN AFFECTING APPEAL TO BENTLEY—SUCCESS OF EXPERIMENTS—ANTICIPATED RESULTS—THE RIDGE-HOUSE ESTATE FIRST MENTIONED BY ITS NEW TITLE—MR. BENTLEY'S INITIATORY LABOURS IN HIS NEW ART—MR. CHUBBARD AND MR. STRINGER—MR. WEDGWOOD'S IMPATIENCE TO ENTER THE FIELD OF ORNAMENTAL ART—MRS. ASHENHURST'S DEATH—CONCLUSION OF PURCHASE—PLANS FOR HOUSE AND WORKS—MR. WEDGWOOD'S OUTLINES OF PART OF THE ESTATE—THE CANAL AT ETRURIA—PROGRESS WITH THE MAIN LINE—BRINDLEY CONFIDENT OF SUCCESS—DISCOVERY OF FOSSILISED REMAINS ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF HARECASTLE—BRINDLEY'S INCESSANT LABOURS—HIS FAILING HEALTH—MR. WEDGWOOD'S SORROW THEREAT—HIS LOVE FOR THE MAN AND VENERATION OF HIS CHARACTER.

CHAPTER XII.

ANCIENT ART AND MODERN ETRURIA.

COINCIDENT with this eager search into nature for materials which should widen the limits of productive industry—for this vital activity was by no means confined to the manufacture in clay—was the popular taste for maritime discovery and colonisation. The voyages of Cook, Anson, Byron, and others, had stimulated public curiosity in an intense degree. Correct geographical knowledge was then confined to comparatively a few; and the popular means of obtaining reliable information on almost any point was lamentably deficient. It was a popular belief that endless islands and occasional continents would still reward the voyager and open new resources to mankind; and hence the most Brobdingnag stories were afloat as to islands peopled with giants and pigmies; and Bentley occasionally amused his friend with some of these. On the occasion of the return of Commodore Byron and Mr. Vane from the Pacific, most astounding fictions became current. It was said, and believed, that they had seen men of the most gigantic mould—veritable Patagonians—as also pigmies worthy of Lilliput. Mr. Wedgwood replied to these stories in his usual vein of pleasantry, suggesting to prepare for the giants 'terrines' capable of holding two gallons, and for the pigmies

vessels of the most minute dimensions. Occasionally he would humorously propose to despatch to these new-discovered isles such unsaleable ware as occupied the place of better things.

Soon after the triumph of the Trent and Mersey Navigation Bill, his friend Mr. Becket, bookseller at the Livy's Head in the Strand, who had rendered such essential service in the matter of Mr. Bentley's pamphlet, ordered a dinner-service of cream-coloured ware. It was manufactured with unusual care, and despatched to London in October. Accompanying the invoice was a most characteristic letter.[1] 'The service is a pretty full one,' writes

[1] We give the invoice appended, as it will show the retail prices then given for cream-ware, as also the important fact that Mr. Wedgwood had not yet received his appointment of Potter to her Majesty:—

Burslem, Oct. 18, 1766.

Mr. Becket

Bought of Josiah Wedgwood
a Service of Cream Colour Ware viz.

1	Oblonge Dish		£0	5 0
2	d° Smaller	@ 4/	0	8 0
2	d° Smaller	2/	0	4 0
2	d° Smaller	1/9	0	3 6
2	d° Smaller	1/6	0	3 0
4	d° Smaller	1/3	0	5 0
6	d° Smaller	/10	0	5 0
1	Drainer		0	1 6
6	doz large plates	6/	1	16 0
1½	doz d° Soops	6/	0	9 0
2	Middle size Terrines & Dishes	8/	0	16 0
2	Square Sallet Dishes	1/6	0	3 0
2	Small Cheese Toasters	1/6	0	3 0
12	Fluted Egg Cups	/4	0	4 0
4	Cast Engin'd Salts	/8	0	2 8
1	2 quart Jug		0	2 0
2	3 pints with grates & Covers	2/	0	4 0
2	pint d°	/6	0	1 0
4	Square Entrie Dishes	/9	0	3 0
2	Sauce Boats & Stands	/8	0	1 4
2	Marine Sauce Bowles & Stands & Spoons		0	8 0
2	Engind Butter Tubs & Stands		0	2 0
2	Oval Bakeing Dishes	1/6	0	3 0
1	Round Basket & Stand		0	2 6
2	Small Oval d°	2/	0	4 0
	Crate & cover		0	2 0
			£6	19 6

Mr. Wedgwood, 'as I know the circle of your learned & ingenious friends is large, & as our ware is brittle to a proverb you would often be wanting to piece out your sett if I had made it a scanty one at first—The plates are of the largest size & cost one shilling ℔ doz. more on that acc^{t}; but your friends if they are anything of connoisseurs in eating will thank me for the indulgence, being very sensible of the advantage of an inch extraordinary in the diameter of a Table-plate, by which that distinctness is preserv'd in eating, which Mr. Hogarth lays so much stress upon in other subjects of taste.'[1] This admirable observation bears out a previous remark that Wedgwood drew analogies serviceable to his art from sources the most opposite and remote—a proof in itself of intellectual powers of the highest kind.

Through the slow process of his own culture by books, observation, and the society of travelled and accomplished men, Mr. Wedgwood saw that the improvements he contemplated in his manufacture were identical, in simplicity and ideal grace, with those which had marked the best period of antique art. Nature, it is true, was as eternal now as in those old days; her fruitfulness as ready to reward obedient culture; and originality as possible in the expression of proportional laws through the force of a varied organism; yet rather than trust wholly to original conceptions, it was best to regard them by, and compare them with, the results of a mysterious and

The appointments of the table evidently varied from those in use at the present day. The absence of twiflers or pudding-plates, as also those for cheese, is to be observed. Egg-cups were introduced, as also fruit-baskets. It is thus obvious that the ordinary dinner of the middle classes was not divided into courses, but served at once.

[1] Wedgwood to Becket, October 20, 1766. Mayer Collection. This is the earliest of the series of modern documents. From the year 1768 their profuse abundance will tend largely to enrich the text. From the postscript to this letter we learn that Mrs. Wedgwood was known as 'Lady Grace' amongst her husband's friends.

lengthened culture, which in many respects had reached the utmost limits of ideal perfection and grace. To this end, and as his means increased, we find him the master of many of those books which from time to time threw light upon the advance of classical and archæological knowledge. Amongst these, and possibly, if we regard the preparative culture necessary to the creation of those beautiful vases and cameos which at no distant date were to astonish alike the ignorant and learned, the most powerful in its effects, was a copy of Count de Caylus' 'Recueil d'Antiquités Egyptiennes, Etrusques, Grecques, Romaines et Gauloises.' Of this work the first volume was published in 1752, the seventh and last in 1767, two years after the author's death; and it was then that Mr. Wedgwood had the loan of a copy from one of his patrons.[1] Early in this year he writes to Bentley: 'Inclos'd are Engine-turning, Antiquities, Plans (of house) &c. . . . You will easily imagine what may be of any use to me in the Antiquitys if you find time to dip into them. The colours of the Earthen Vases, the paintings, the substances used by the Ancient Potters, with their methods of working, burning &c.—if you meet with anything of that sort, the uses they were intended for &c. by way of Index with references to the plates wo^d I think be the shortest way & least trouble for you. Who knows what you may hit upon, or what we may strike out betwixt us—you may depend on an ample share of the proffits arising from any such discoverys. I have more Volumes of Antiquities at your service when you can dispense with them.'

The volumes which seem to have been most fruitful of suggestions to the friends were the first two, and those

[1] Mr. Wedgwood and his partner purchased a copy for themselves, as we shall see, in 1769.

sections of them which depicted in figures, vases, cameos, lamps, and ornamental bordering, some few of the masterpieces of Etruscan, Grecian, and Roman art. From the Egyptian section they could gather but little, from the Gaulish antiquities less; although the profound sense of repose, which is the great characteristic of Egyptian art, could not have been wholly inoperative on a mind like

(Fig. 92.) VASE FROM COUNT DE CAYLUS.

(Fig. 93.) VASE IN BLACK BASALTES. MR. ROGER SMITH'S COLLECTION.

Wedgwood's, so readily recipient of ideal influences. These two volumes were a fountain of inspiration, rather than reproduction. Thus, in Volume I., the Etruscan vases in Plates 31, 32, 33, 37, 39, 41, and 44, were partially reproduced. It is curious to trace these threads of likeness, and modifications of exquisite form and ornament. Annexed is a copy of a beautiful Etruscan vase—white figures on a black ground, from the great

Frenchman's work. The companion to it is a vase in black basaltes, which, though unlike, still betrays a reference to a geometrical outline essentially the same. If the form of the Etruscan vase is the more perfect of the two, the foot and plinth of Wedgwood's vase is more beautiful, and the ornaments are as masterly. Thus it was that Wedgwood, by a reference to nature as also to art, caught up the true idea of antique grace, without the servility of direct copy. Count de Caylus produced this work for the especial use of artists, as a means of promoting amongst them some true idea of ancient art, and inspiring them with a taste for simplicity both in form and decoration.[1] The cameos in the Grecian section of the same volume, particularly those in Plates 51, 52, and 54, served as admirable prototypes for essays of the same character in the jasper bodies. The lamps in the Roman section were as fruitful of suggestions as those in Plate 91, and the vases in Plates 98 and 99. The Plates in Volume II. afforded a varied class of modified forms; Volume IV. gave but one prototype; and Volumes V., VI., and VII. variously contributed wholly or partially to beautiful forms in hand and suspension lamps, cameos, plaques, and vases. The borderings or friezes likewise supplied many ideas for the patterns enamelled or printed on services of cream-ware, in relation to which there is so much to show and say.

Towards the close of the preceding year, 1766, Mr. Wedgwood seems to have made his first proposals to Bentley relative to a partnership, and the concentration of their energy and talent in one direction. From all we have seen, we may conclude that it was a union which on many accounts he had long desired; and now that the

[1] Letter-press, tom. i. pp. 114–15.

prospects were in every way so encouraging, of bringing ornamental ware of many kinds to a perfection hitherto unknown, he naturally wished to secure the aid and counsel of a friend whose fidelity, judgment, and pre-eminent ability he had long and fully tested. Mr. Wedgwood perhaps felt that Bentley was wasting his singular powers in trivial, obscure, and miscellaneous labours, instead of concentrating them on more important objects; whilst, on his own part, he wished, by resigning a portion of his directive authority, to secure more time for chemical and philosophical researches—these being, as he well knew, the basis on which a continuity of progress rested. But, with rare modesty, Bentley raised several objections to this union, principally on account of his little knowledge of the potter's art. To these the reply was very characteristic of Wedgwood's generosity, and high opinion of his friend's versatile abilities:—'I have read your letter many times over, & find several of the objections to our nearer approach may be surmounted & I shall speak to those you have mention'd in the order you have stated them—The first is "your total ignorance of the business."—That I deny, as friend Tristram says to St Paul—you have taste, the best foundation for our intended concern, & which must be our *Primum Mobile*, for without that, all will stand still, or better it did so, & for the rest it will soon be learn'd by so apt a scholar. The very air of this Country will soon inspire you with the mere mechanical part of our trade.—The difficulty of leaving your business in Liverpool, which seemeth now to be altering for the better, I cannot so easily obviate, this being a matter of Calculation, in which there is no data to proceed upon, but probabilities of future contingencies, which we cannot investigate, or command with

the certainty that I could wish my friend to have in a matter of so much importance to his interest. I have it's true, a great opinion of the design answering our most sanguine expectations with respect to proffit, but if you should suffer as much on the other hand by having your attention taken off your mercantile concerns, *you* wo^d^ be a loser upon the whole, though *I* sho^d^ not, & to what degree that loss might be extended I can have no idea, nor you any certainty, unless we co^d^ divine in what proportion your absence wo^d^ affect the success, or prevent the increase of your commerce.

'The money objection is obviated to my hand, & I doubt not in a way that will be agreeable to us both. But the leaving your friends, & giving up a thousand agreeable connections, & pleasures at Liverpool, for which you can have no compensation in kind (indeed my friend I know from experience you cannot) this staggers my hopes more than everything else put together, and allways hath done, for I have often seriously thought at it before I rec^d^ your letter, & as I wish you to see every shade in this chequer'd piece, permit me to ask you? Can you part from your Octogon, & enlightened Octogonian brethern, to join the diminutive and weak society of a Country Chapel?

'Can you give up the rational & elevated enjoyment of your Philosophical Club, for the peurile téte-à-téte of a Country fireside? And to include all under this head in one question. Can you exchange the frequent opportunities of seeing, & conversing with your learned and ingenious friends, which your present situation affords you, besides ten thousand other elegancies & enjoyments of a Town life, to employ yourself amongst mechanicks, dirt, and smoke? inliven'd indeed with so much

of the Pastoral life as you shall choose for your self out of the Ridgehouse Estate?—If this prospect does not fright you, I have some hopes, & if you think you could really fall in love with, & make a Mistress of this new business as I have done of mine, I sho^d^ have little or no doubt of our success, for if we consider the great variety of colours in our raw Materials, the infinite ductility of Clay, & that we have universal beauty to copy after, we have certainly the fairest prospect of inlarging this branch of Manufacture to our wishes, & as Genius will not be wanting, I am firmly perswaded that our *proffits* will be in proportion to our *application*, & I am as confident, that it wo^d^ be beyond comparison more congenial & delightfull, to every particle of matter, sense, & spirit in your composition, to be the Creator as it were of beauty, rather than merely the vehicle, or medium to convey it from one hand to another, if other circumstances can but be render'd tolerable. Let us therefore endeavour to take a more distinct view of the outlines of our project, which may furnish us with some amusement at least, & perhaps it may not be the first time we have pleased ourselves with future schemes that have eluded our grasp, & vanished away like the morning Cloud or early dew.

'The time of coming you may make agreeable to yourself, it will be 12 months at least before the works can be built, & I suppose you wo^d^ choose to have a house, with so much of a farm as will keep you a Horse, a Cow, & a Pig, with a few other domestick animals, all which will take up some time to make ready.

'If the Alderman wo^d^ like to build, I will make him a building lease, if not, I will do it myself for a common rent, so you may be settleing the plan of one house for

yourself, & another for my Bro[r] unless you can agree to live together.

'The articles to begin the work will be—Root flowerpots of various sorts ornamented & plain. Essence pots, Bough pots, flowerpots, and Cornucopias.

Vases and ornaments of various sizes, colours, mixtures & forms, ad infinitum.

'Then proceed to Toilet furniture, and enrich these & other ornaments with gold burnt in.

'Elegant Teachests may be made.

'Snuff & other boxes.

'Fish, Fowl, and Beasts, with two leged Animals in various attitudes.

'Ten thousand other *substantial forms*, that neither you nor I, nor anybody else, know anything of at present.

'If all these things sho[d] fail us, I hope our good genius will direct us in the choice of others.'[1]

In the spring of the following year, during a month's visit to London, Mr. Wedgwood seems to have expressed his wishes on the subject of the partnership more strongly than he had hitherto done, and Bentley no longer resisted the manly and eloquent appeal. 'Your most acceptable letter of the 15th,' writes Mr. Wedgwood, 'gave me the highest pleasure in seting before me, a nearer prospect than I had yet had, of a union that I have long coveted, & which I do not doubt will be lasting, delightful & beneficial to us both, & as to the time & manner of leaving Liverpool make it most agreeable to yourself

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, November 8 and 10, 1766. This is one of the most charming and valuable letters of Mr. Wedgwood's extant. It is valuable inasmuch as it proves the wonderful fertility of his creative powers, and the progress his manufacture had made at that date. It also shows that had his time and attention been given to literary pursuits, he might have added another illustrious name to the philosophic writers of the eighteenth century.

in every respect, and it will be perfectly so to me. At present indeed I am not in possession of the Land you know to build you either a House or Works, but am now in treaty with the Old Lady's Steward, and you have furnish'd me with a very strong inducement to comply with allmost any terms they shall propose.' [1]

In less than a month from the date of this letter, a circumstance occurred of a very painful and tragic character, which, without doubt, tended indirectly to hasten and consolidate this union of the friends. It made, evidently, a deep impression on Mr. Wedgwood's mind, and, throughout subsequent years of smiling fortunes, must have occasionally recurred to him with the bitterness of a recent grief. His brother the 'Alderman's' post in Liverpool or its neighbourhood, was so easy in its nature as to allow of frequent visits to his family in Staffordshire; and early in the spring of this year, he was, whilst making one of these, seized with an illness of a nature more severe than any he had hitherto known. His friends nursed him most tenderly through it; and, to hasten growing convalescence, Mr. Wedgwood took him daily airings in his chaise. When his recovery was complete, he, by way of a little change, accompanied the latter to London. They spent some pleasant days together, and on Sunday, June 4, Mr. Wedgwood, dating from the Baptist Head Coffeehouse, tells Bentley that he and a party, including Mr. and Mrs. Blake and 'his Aldermanship,' are going to spend the day at Greenwich. On the

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, May 20, 1767. From this it appears that Mrs. Ashenhurst would only part with her estate piecemeal. The portion containing the old farmhouse and its surrounding fields had already, as we have seen, passed into Mr. Wedgwood's possession. But the land in the valley below the ridge, subsequently occupied by the Useful and Ornamental Works, was still the subject of negotiation. Another plot on the opposite side of the highway to Newcastle was at a later date purchased from Mr. Egerton of Tatton.

9th or 10th of the same month, Mr. Wedgwood started for home, leaving his brother in town in perfect health. He reached Burslem on the 12th, and on the next day wrote a brief but cheerful letter to Bentley. Another day, and what follows was wrung from him in the first hours of a great agony. 'It was but yesterday that I wrote to you with a heart perfectly at ease, & rejoicing with my family and friends at our meeting again in health and safety, after a month's absence from each other. But alass! what a change did the next hour produce! The post which took your L^r from me, brought me the meloncholly account of the death of a much loved Brother. Your friend & my poor Brother is Dead, is no more, is no longer the warm & benevolent friend, Affect^e Bro^r or Chearfull Companion, but is now a lifeless insensible Clod of Earth. A sad reverse. And what has greatly height-end the schock to his surviving friends is the circumstances attending this meloncholly event—On Wednesday Evening he went to see the fireworks at Renelagh & afterwards came to the Swan at W^r Bridge, where we used to dine, and got a little refreshment & staid 'till about 12, asked for a bed, with which they unfortunately could not accommodate him, so that he was obliged to go see for one elsewhere, & in passing the Riverside 'tis supposed he slipped in, he was found the next morning about 5 & the Acc^t bro^t to Mr. Hodgson, & these are the particulars he has wrote me, and in his own words, for I scarcely know what I write myself—My Bro^r Tho^s is going to London, & my Bro^r in law[1] will accompany him to perform the last kind offices of Humanity to their departed Brother. My wife's circumstances will not permit me to think of leaving her so long, otherwise I sho^d have gone

[1] Probably the Rev. Mr. Willet, of Newcastle.

with them—As a small Testimony of the Esteem my poor Bro^r had for you, he hath left you five Guineas to buy a mourning ring. I know he allways wished to be remember'd by you, & I doubt not but you will comply with this, his last request—I know you will sympathize with me in my distress, & I need not tell you how doubly wellcome a few lines will be at this time from a real affectionate, & sensible friend, such a one as you have ever been to me, since I had the happiness of being known to you. Let us now be dearer to each other if possible than ever. Let me adopt you for my Bro^r & fill up the chasm this cruel accident has made in my afflicted heart. Excuse me my dear friend, the subject is too much for me—I am your miserable friend, J. Wedgwood.'[1] Mr. Bentley seems to have responded to this touching appeal with a sympathy and affection which did much towards soothing the terrible affliction. Henceforth they may be said to have been indeed brothers; acting by one impulse in all their noble undertakings.

On the same day on which the above letter was written, Mr. Wedgwood addressed two others to his friend Mr. Hodgson, merchant in Coleman Street, City, who with himself had been left executor of the 'Alderman's' will. In one he says: 'You know my late Brother's Connections & who to invite to the funeral, let everything be done in a handsome manner, he has left enough behind him to do it with—Mr. Sparrow tells me you are left executor along with me, of which I am very glad on many accounts, you will therefore with propriety take his effects under your care. Excuse me my good friend from dwelling any longer upon this affecting subject—it is indeed too much for me. Many things if you were here

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, Sunday morning, June 14, 1767.

I should ask you, & yet I am afraid to know them. I know you will do everything in your power to preserve the memory of your Deceased friend from censure. I shall be very unhappy till I know some further particulars, but I leave everything to your good sense, sincerity & friendship.' In the other letter he adds: 'Pray take the desk at Nowers into your custody. You will find in it a little box, in which I put the notes he had for his money, & other papers which I wo[d] wish you to take out & send them to me at a convenient opportunity.'

All the rest of this sad history has passed into oblivion. Whether the unfortunate gentleman's death was the result of accident or foul play was probably never known. If watch or money was missing from his person, he was, without doubt, another victim of those mysterious crimes from which our less lawless and better protected generation is not exempt, and which in that age abounded in a lamentable degree. But, in this case, there were circumstances which added their own pathos to this generous and kind man's fate. 'The loss of a Brother,' says Mr. Wedgwood in the fragmentary draft of a letter to Ralph Griffiths the publisher, 'a sensible, Benevolent, and truly Affectionate Brother, such an one as you well know your late friend was to me, is very afflicting to a heart rather too susceptible of grief. And indeed I had long grieved for him as for one who from an unhappy combination of circumstances could enjoy or relish very few of the comforts of life, & but little hopes alass of . . . .' This is all that was written, and all we know.[1]

An attack of illness had ushered in this year of sorrow; and in July a bilious complaint, from which Mr. Wedgwood greatly and frequently suffered, again prostrated

[1] Wedgwood to Ralph Griffiths, July 4, 1767.

him. 'But it is happily gone off without my being very ill,' he writes to Bentley, '& I have now begun of a course of Exercise which I intend to continue, & consists in rideing on horseback from 10 to 20 miles a day, & by way of food and Physick, I take Whey & yolks of eggs in abundance with a mixture of Rhubarb & Soap.'[1] In August he had the misfortune to again hurt his disabled knee, which temporarily prevented his accepting an invitation to Liverpool from his friend. Yet nothing stayed the keen pursuit of his congenial labours, or lessened the preparative work for the union he so desired. At this date there was great trouble annexed to the final purchase of the Ridge-House Estate; Mrs. Ashenhurst increasing her demands, and threatening, if they were not complied with, to let or sell it to some other person. 'I have wrote to Her by Mr. Hodgson,' says Mr. Wedgwood to his friend, '& instructed him to treat with her. If he succeeds, I hope yet to be able to build a Vase work the latter end of this summer.'[2] At the close of a month we learn: 'Mr. Hodgson has been again with the old Lady (Mrs. Ashenhurst) & says I must form no dependance upon her, so I must build Elsewhere, for build I must.—Pray be ordering your matters to leave them at a short warning—I expect a sett of works will be to lett in a few weeks, with a tolerable smart house to them; & ornamentals of various forms & for various uses are much wanted. Cream colour Tyles are much wanted, & the consumption will be great for Dairys, Bathes, Summer houses, Temples &c. &c. This Article will come under the *Ornamental Class*, & you may be looking out for a sober Tyle maker amongst your Potthouses to bring along

[1] July 6, 1767.
[2] Wedgwood to Bentley, July 6, 1767.

with you.—I am going on with my experiments upon various Earths, Clays, &c. for different bodys, & shall next go upon Glazes. Many of my experiments turn out to my wishes & convince me more & more, of the extensive *capability* of our Manufacture for further improvements. It is at present comparatively in a rude, uncultivated state & may readily be polished, & brot to much greater perfection.—Such a revolution, I believe, is at hand, & you must assist in proffitt by it.'[1] After a visit to Liverpool in October, Mr. Wedgwood adds: 'I am allways so much better satisfy'd in my own mind, & pleas'd with everything about me after spending a few days with you, that I long more and more for the time of your settlement at Hetruria,[2] when I may feast every day upon what I am now permitted to taste of only two or three times a year or so.' Mr. Bentley, on his own part, had begun the preparative work for transforming himself into an ornamental potter. He made drawings for candlesticks, saltcellers, and other articles; at Mr. Wedgwood's request, he set Miss Oates and other ladies of his acquaintanceship to cut out on paper various ornamental shapes; and he took a boy apprentice as a modeller and draughtsman.[3] To aid this youth's instruction, various matters were sent from Burslem. 'The day you receive this Morriss will bring you several Crates of goods with the invoice, & with them, a box of prepared Plaister, a

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, August 5, 1767.

[2] This is the first occasion on which we find the new title of the Ridge-House Estate. It is not known at whose suggestion it arose—possibly from Dr. Darwin, whose love of classical allusions is well known. The spelling of the old classical dictionaries was soon changed.

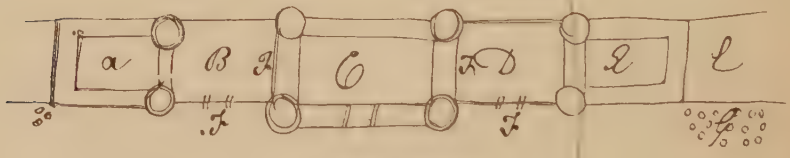
[3] 'I hope the good Ladys und[r] your roof are employ'd in forming a thousand pretty shapes—You need but give them a hint & their ingenuity will pursue it farther than any *Male* imagination can possibly be wound up to—Remember your promise, the moment I recollected it I threw my own drawings & paper away.' — Wedgwood to Bentley, April 11, 1767, 'past ten at night.'

Terrine Mould, & a Candlestick mould, a lump of Clay, these last articles in a seperate box, & in another box 30 drawings of vases & flowers &c. for your apprentice to copy after, pray give him a Charge not to soil the drawings of vases, and let him have only one at a time.'[1] Mr. Bentley, with characteristic generosity, called Chubbard, the Liverpool portrait-painter, to his aid; but he so utterly failed in the plastic art as to necessitate a genteel pretext for dropping his services. With Mr. Stringer, a painter of Knutsford, the friends were more fortunate. He suggested some sphinxes as a support for a beautiful column Mr. Wedgwood had modelled. After which the latter wrote to Bentley:—'I have given Mr. Stringer an invitation to Burslem, and believe when he comes he will stay some time, perhaps a fortnight or longer with me as I have proposed to him the Painting of a Groupe of figures — Mr. & Mrs. Willet & their four girls, & perhaps our Children to fill up with—How wo[d] you have them dispos'd?—If you can contrive to come & spend a week with us when Mr. Stringer is here as he is good natur'd, modest, & ingenious, & has a ready hand at drawing, we can sketch out a vast number of pretty things in that time, which may be laid by to mature, till we can bring them into use. A Manufacturer of Ornamentals cannot have too great a store of that sort.'[2] Of his impatience to enter upon these realms of artistic grace and beauty we have evidence in his own words:—'Vases with high Crown'd hats!—Have you ever thought seriously, as you ought to do on that subject. I never think of it, but new improvements crowd thick upon me, & allmost overwhelm my patience, so much do I long to

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, November 19, 1767. [2] Ibid.

be engaged in that delightful employment, which I have every day fuller assurance of making as profitable to the purse, as it must be pleasant to the mind, but you know what sort of partner it requires; either resolve quickly to join me yourself, or find me out another kindred genius. I have agreed with a brickmaker, and shall build away like fury next year.'[1]

Mr. Wedgwood could now speak definitely of his intentions, for during December Mrs. Ashenhurst died after a brief illness; and his purchase of the remaining portion of the Ridge-House Estate was at once concluded with her son Major Ashenhurst. Various plans for both the hall and the works had been in circulation since an early part of the year, and had undergone modifications at different hands. Dr. Darwin, Mr. Whitehurst of Derby, and others had been consulted, and Mr. Bentley drew an original plan for the hall, which was found faulty. Even Mr. Pickford of Derby, the architect, had to submit his own designs to the correction of the master-mind of Wedgwood. 'I have sent you below the *last* ground plan I have thought of for our works—the extent in length is abo^{t} 150 y^{ds}—The hovels you know may be

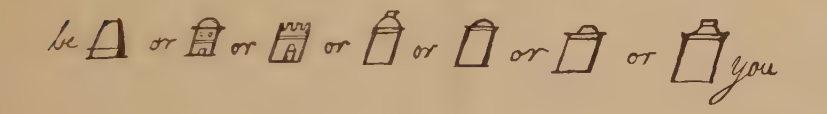


(Fig. 94.) SKETCH OF HOVELS.

made into either round Towers or Domes, A is for Plates & Dishes only. B is a yard wall'd in for Coales—F clay, & rubbish, that nothing may be seen, or expos'd on the outside of the building.—C is for every other sort of

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, December 1767.

usefull ware—D: the Court to d°—E ornamental work with its Court, & a Plantation before it. G.—'[1] Two points are observable in this plan, apart from its organised utility; all that would be offensive to the eye, or at least suggest the idea of disorder, is to be carefully concealed, and an air of country stillness and freshness is to be secured to the precincts of the busy manufactory by the foliage of trees. The same ideas of beauty as inseparable from utility haunt him in everything. Even the ovens may just as well have a tasteful covering:—'The Hovels may



. . . see my line is at an end, or I do not know where I should stop building hovels, and they may be decorated with Facias, blank windows, &c. at a very little expense.'

A few days later Mr. Wedgwood's pencil is again employed:—'On the other side is a sketch of part of the R: House Estate, which though it is not very nicely drawn is nevertheless accurate with respect to dimentions, being offtraced from Mr. Henshall's plan of the survey. My principal reason for sending it to you, is that you may consider if your house on Brindley Bank will not be too near the wharf. I believe it must be larger than I have drawn it, as much room will be wanted for coals, & our bulky materials. I sho^d be very glad not to have a Wharf at all, but that cannot be avoided, it will be absolutely necessary, & if I do not make one myself the Proprietors will, as it will be the nearest point to Newcastle, Hanley Green & Cobridge, and consequently

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, December 17, 1767.

will I doubt be allways full of Carters & Boatmen, & very noisy. The works are only laid down about 115 yards long, but that will extend near 150 & be little or no more than I occupy at present. E is to be a work for dishes and plates only, & D the yard to it to hold sager Clay, rubbish &c. C, the work for every other sort of goods & B the yard to it—& A the ornamental work with a yard to it.

(Fig. 95.) THE RIDGE-HOUSE ESTATE AS SKETCHED BY MR. WEDGWOOD.

'The land on the other side the lane F F &c. belongs to Mr. Egerton of Tatton. I have wrote (by Mr. Sparrow) to Mr. Tompkinson to know if it will be sold & have for answer that if Mr. Egerton makes a capital purchase, which he has been sometime in treaty about, Mr. T. believes he will sell his scattered estates in this neighbour-

hood. The Estate is £50 a year. I believe you will think me allmost out of my senses for thinking of buying more Land, & indeed it is not because I shall have money to spare, that I wo[d] make this purchase, but firstly (for I have many reasons) it is full of limestone which I shall unavoidably lay dry in guttering for my own, secondly I would have the wharf on that side the lane, & perhaps my works too, & thirdly if I do not buy it for those purposes somebody else will, who may be very disagreeable neighbours. My application is at present a secret, and after these hints I sho[d] be glad to have your thoughts of it.'[1]

At this date the canal in the neighbourhood of Etruria was begun:—'Mr. Henshall & I spent yesterday and to day at Hetruria in setting out the canal through that district, & on Monday next I shall begin to make it. The fields unfortunately are so very level, that the canal will run in a straight line through them, at least so it is set out, for I could not prevail upon the Vandal to give me one *line of* Grace—He must go the nearest and best way or Mr. Brindley wo[d] go mad.' There were also some difficulties about the branch canal to the works, but this was obviated by widening the chief canal at this point. The public wharf was founded on the opposite side of the highway, and thus Mr. Bentley's intended house was likely to escape some of the disagreeables Mr. Wedgwood had anticipated.

Of the main line of the Trent and Mersey Canal upwards of ten miles had now been finished; more than 600 men were constantly employed; and Brindley, in spite of many supplementary labours in connection with branch canals, and with engineering works totally distinct from

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, December 24, 1767.

this navigation and at remote distances, was constantly traversing the line from point to point—chiefly, however, devoting his time and skill to the difficulties connected with the Harecastle Tunnel. He was well aware how much his friend Wedgwood and the other master-potters were anticipating the time when they should have easy and cheap access to the tideway of the Mersey. 'When I can send you in 2 or 3 days any goods you ord^{r} from my Wareh^{e} at Burslem to yours in Liverpool,' wrote Mr. Wedgwood to his friend, 'we shall stand some chance of making our new connection worth our attention.' This was written in the July of the preceding year; and now that the opening of a few miles of the canal had substantially proved the enormous trading facilities the navigation would confer, the public and the proprietary were alike zealous for the completion of the great work. 'Yesterday I return'd from our Navigation Committee who were in the highest spirits at the great and successful progress made in the works in so short a time. They are in a very good way & there does not seem to be any doubt of their continuing so. Mr. Brindley was there and assur'd the Gent^{n} that he could complete the whole in five years from Xmas next (1767), & there being a Gent^{n} present (not one of the Committee) who doubted of the possibility of its being completed in so short a time & seem'd inclin'd to lay a wager upon it, Mr. B. told him that it was a challenge he never refused upon anything which he seriously asserted, & offer'd then to article in a Wager of £200 that he perform'd what he had said—A second subscription was then mention'd by some of the Members, but Mr. B. advis'd them not to open one till they saw a little farther, whether they sho^{d} like to fill it up themselves, at the same time he assured them that whenever

the subscription was open'd, he wo[d] subscribe £2000 more, w[ch] was all the law wo[d] permitt, as he has already £2000 in the present subscription. The stocks upon the Wolverhampton Canal was I think he s[d] 30 ℔ Ct above Parr, & he was very certain that THE GREAT TRUNK was a more substantial & better security, than the Wolverhampton, or any other branch could be, as Everything w[ch] communicates w[th] must benefit us, & no parellel can ever be made to injure ours. What effect these assurances from a man of Mr. Brindleys known integrity may have upon our stocks, I do not know, at present, it is, as it ever has been at parr, & if you at anytime let me know what sum your friend wo[d] wish to invest, I will endeavour to do it for him at Parr, but will not promise long to do it at that price.'[1]

The General Assemblies of the Proprietors of the Navigation were occasionally honoured by the presence of the Duke of Bridgewater and Earl Gower. The proceedings were carried on so unanimously and efficiently that at one meeting (April 1767) the Earl pleasantly styled them *The Amicable Society* of Navigators. It was on this occasion that the assembly voted a Mr. Randall, who had attempted to execute the canal with ploughs, but signally failed, the sum of thirty guineas as a compensation for loss of time, and to encourage him in any future attempts of ingenuity. 'I wish it had been more,' writes Mr. Wedgwood to his friend, 'though some of our Proprietors think it a work of superoragation that they might very well have excus'd themselves from performing. Narrow minds have no idea of paying more money than the Laws

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley. The letter is undated, but, from the subjects mentioned, was undoubtedly written during the autumn of 1767. It is written on a sheet of paper 15 inches wide by 19 inches long, and this entirely filled. It is more like a newspaper than a letter, and Mr. Wedgwood very humorously suggests that it will be taken for the rough draft of a deed.

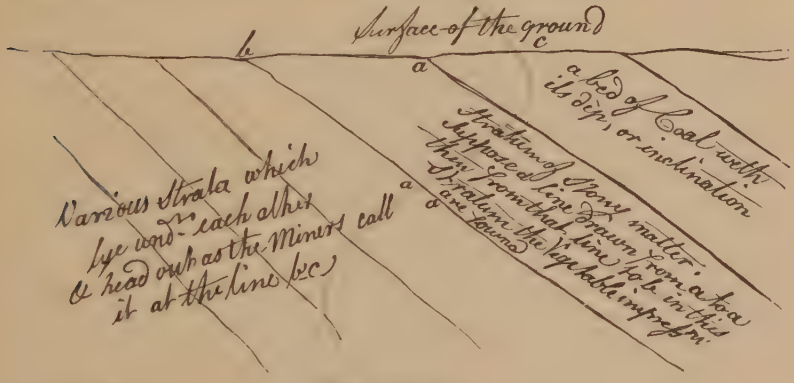
of the Land oblige them to.'[1] It was at this meeting that the intended course of the canal was varied a mile in order to take it over the rock-salt mines at Lawton.

While Brindley and his coadjutors thus carried on their great work, various discoveries were made, which, in that day of very circumscribed geological knowledge, were a source of wonder to many. 'Have I ever told you,' writes Mr. Wedgwood to Bentley, 'of the wonderful & surprising curiositys we find in our Navigation? Sometime last month we found under a bed of Clay, at the depth of five yards from the surface, a prodigious rib, with the vertebre of the back bone of a monstrous sized Fish, thought by some connoissieurs to belong to the identical Whale that was so long ago swallowed by Jonah!—— Another bone found near the same place in a stratum of Gravel under a bed of Clay of a very considerable thickness, is of so singular a construction that though I have shewn it to several able anatomists, they cannot decide whether it is the *first* or *last* of the vertebre of some monstrous animal, nor whether that animal was an Inhabitant of the *Sea* or *Land*.[2] Perhaps by the skill you have lately acquir'd in Anatomy, you can throw some light upon these matters, but then another difficulty arises—whether you sho[d] be carried to the bones—*or they to you*. The latter wo[d] be very expensive by Land Carr[e] & if they come upon the *Weaver* the Boatmen are sure to pilfer them, if it is only to keep their hands in use—These with many other curious Phenomena are met with on the South side Harecastle—Others of a different but not less

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, April 2, 1767.

[2] It was probably the fossilised remains of a gigantic fish. At the period of the formation of the coal strata, fishes were the dominant organic creatures. But they were of a kind of which we have now comparatively few representatives.

curious nature are discover'd on the north side of the same Hill—A sand stone in which are inclosed small bits of Coal, with various other mineral & heterogenious substances. This stone is so hard that they are obliged to blow it up with Gunpowder.—Great variety of impressions from vegetables, such as Fern,[1] Vetches, Crowfoot, Hawthorn, Yew, Withey & many other kinds, with roots & trunks of Trees, some of them two feet diameter,[2] & all of them converted into a kind of soft stone, which moulders, or shivers to atoms in the open Air. What surprises me most is that these vegetable substances, or rather impressions, should be found in a bed of Metal, as the miners call it, that runs und[r] a stratum of Coal, but this I must observe to you, that when this stony stratum gets to be actually under the Coals, then no impressions are found. I believe a slight sketch of the mines will be necessary to explain my meaning.


Surface of the ground
b
a
c
a bed of Coal with its dips, or inclination
Various Strata which lye over each other & head out as the Miners call it at the line &c
a
b

(Fig. 96.) SKETCH OF STRATA.

[1] *Neuropteris cordata.* Specimens of this fine fern are yet frequently found. The fossilised leaves are some inches long.

[2] These were probably *Sigillaria reniformis.* Specimens of this fossil tree—some of them with trunks nearly a yard in diameter—were found during the later excavation of the Harecastle Tunnel. They were all perpendicular to the strata, though not, strictly speaking, upright, in consequence of the inclination of the latter. Garner's Natural History of Staffordshire, Supplement, p. 54.

'I sho^d be glad to know from some of you Gent^n learned in Natural History & Philosophy the most probable theory to account for these vegetables (as they once were) forming part of a stratum, which dips into the Earth to our knowledge 60 or 100 y^ds deep, & for ought we know to the Centre! These various strata, the Coals included, seem from various circumstances to have been in a Liquid state, & to have travel'd along what was then the surface of the Earth; something like the Lava from Mount Vesuvius. They wind & turn about, like a Serpentine River, and we have one under a Hill *Mole Cop*, which seems to have been formed by them, as the mines are all turned by it, some to the East and others to the West—But I have done. I have got beyond my depth—These wonderful works of Nature are too vast for my narrow microscopic comprehension. I must bid adieu to them for the present, & attend to what better suits my Capacity. The forming of a Jug or Teapot.'[1]

Canal navigation had now taken its hold upon the public mind, and schemes and projectors were starting up in all directions. Every county must have its canal, and every capitalist was now as eager as before he was reluctant to share in the profits of these undertakings. Bills were in the House to connect almost all the great midland towns by branches to the Grand Trunk Navigation—as the Coventry, Birmingham and Wolverhampton, and Loughborough schemes; and Brindley's labours were so hurried and incessant as to make his friends most anxious for him. With reference to the Loughborough scheme, Mr. Wedgwood writes to Bentley:—'Mr. Brindley has been with them lately, & he is going to Scotland

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, undated.

& Ireland in a few weeks. I am afraid he will do too much, & leave us before his vast designs are executed, he is so incessantly harassed on every side, that he hath no rest either for his mind or Body, & will not be prevailed upon to take proper care of his health—I most cordially join in your benevolent sentiments respecting Projectors, but do not allow either of your exceptions, for I think Mr. Brindley—*The Great. The fortunate, money geting* Brindley, an object of Pity! and a real sufferer for the good of the Public.——He may get a few thousands, but what does he give in exchange? His *Health* & I fear his Life too, unless he grows wiser, & takes the advice of his friends before it is too late.'[1] A month after Mr. Wedgwood adds: 'Poor Mr. Brindley was not well enough to attend the Committee & General Assembly,[2] he has now given up a journey into Scotland & Ireland, which he had promised Mr. Garbett & L^d^ Hereford to make this spring, & is going to Buxton for a few weeks, which I hope will have a good effect upon his constitution, as his ailments certainly proceed from a too intense & constant application to business, both with body & mind. I am going to see him this morning, & shall endeavour to perswade him to be idle for a season, that his stay amongst us may be the longer for it.'[3] But such was the incessant nature of his duties, that it was autumn before the needed holiday was taken. 'Mr. & Mrs. Brindley are return'd,' Mr. Wedgwood tells his friend. 'He had little more rest there than he has at home—Such a man is known everywhere & cannot retire. He is a good deal better, but his constitution requires more than a fortnight's rest.'[4]

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, March 2, 1767.

[2] Of the Trent and Mersey Navigation.

[3] Wedgwood to Bentley, April 2, 1767.

[4] Ibid. September 9, 1767.

Brindley's principal disease was diabetes, which for at least eight years before his death affected him in an increasing degree. Unwilling as he was to take rest, on account of the immense responsibility connected with his undertakings, and the impossibility of stopping works on which the bread of hundreds depended, nature sometimes gave way, and he had to stay his too willing hand. On these occasions he generally left home for a few days with his wife; and it was on their returning from one of these brief excursions that Mr. Wedgwood wrote: 'Mr. Brindley & his Lady call'd here in their way home. Lay with us, and just left us this morning—We are to spend to morrow with them at Newchapel, & as I allways edify full as much in that man's company as at Church, I promise myself to be much wiser the day following. It is an old adage that a man is either a Fool or a Physician at Fifty, & considering the opportunitys I have with the Brindleys and Bentleys of the Age, if I am not a very wise mortal before that age, I must be a blockhead in grain.'[1]

Such was Wedgwood's opinion of his great contemporary and friend.

[1] Wedgwood to Bentley, February 22, 1768.

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